

Career Readiness

Teacher Toolkit

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Toolkit Overview

This toolkit will help you bring career readiness learning to life with students. It includes three complete lesson plans on career exploration and planning, resume writing, and interviewing, as well as shorter activities you can layer onto existing lesson plans.

Each lesson in this toolkit includes everything you'll need: instructions, student-facing handouts, PowerPoint decks, learning objectives, and standards alignment. You can grab and go or build your own lessons using the resources and activities here according to your needs. Everything is designed for in-person and virtual learning.

Lesson 1: Career exploration and planning lesson

This 60-minute lesson plan has everything you need to teach your students how to approach career planning and successfully navigate the ever-changing world of work. It includes three activities.

Lesson 2: How to build a stand-out resume

This 60-minute lesson plan has everything you need to teach your students resumewriting skills so they can write resumes that grab employers' attention and, most importantly, lead to interviews. It includes 3 activities.

Lesson 3: How to prepare students for interviews

This 60-minute lesson plan has everything you need to teach your students interviewing skills so they're ready to land that summer internship or nail their first job interview. It includes 3 activities.

Individual activities perfect for existing lesson plans

Not looking for a whole lesson? Pick and choose from several teacher-approved activities according to your classroom needs. Each is designed for in-person or virtual learning and can be found within each lesson plan.

Lesson 1: Career Exploration and Planning

Grades:	9-12
Topic:	Career readiness
Length of lesson:	60 minutes or 1-2 class periods for a full-length lesson, including one of the three activities.

Required learning materials/resources:

- [Career exploration and planning PowerPoint](#)
 - Real people, real pathways activity handout (included in Appendix)
 - LinkedIn for students activity handout (included in Appendix)
 - Self-assessment handout (included in Appendix)
 - Tech tool recommendations
 - Stopwatch/timer
- Learning objectives:**

Students will be able to:

- Reflect on their unique strengths, skills, and career aspirations.
- Explore examples of career paths by reading or viewing profiles of various professionals.
- Conduct an informational interview.
- Become familiar with career exploration tools online.
- Draft a profile on LinkedIn that they can continue to refine and tailor.

Common Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.2

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.4

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.6

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.7

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.8

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.9

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.1

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.2

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.3

Overview

This 60-minute lesson plan has everything you need to teach your students how to approach career planning, and successfully navigate the ever-changing world of work.

It includes materials, learning objectives and standards, activities and instructions, and student handouts. We also recommend tech tools that you can use to make the learning experience fun and interactive for your students.

Introduction

When students enter the classroom or sign into class online, project the slide that displays the quotes and question. You can also use a collaborative tool like [Padlet](#) and post the question there.

Ask: “Do any of these quotes resonate with you? Which one(s) and why? What do you think they have to do with your future career? Take five minutes to write down what you would say.”

Body of lesson

Invite students to share out. If you use Padlet, give students the opportunity to read each other’s responses before they share. If you’re teaching in person, you can cold call or ask for volunteers. Online, you can ask students to type in the chat box. As students are sharing, note patterns that come up in their responses.

Once several students share, emphasize the importance of making decisions for fundamental, not instrumental, reasons.

Doing something for instrumental reasons means you think your action is a means to an end, that it’s going to take you somewhere specific. But what if it doesn’t work out?

Doing something for fundamental reasons means you think your action is inherently valuable, regardless of what it may or may not lead to. Fundamental reasoning is more sustainable. It encourages you to align your actions with your values and allows you to have flexibility when it comes to setting career goals.

“You must live with a certain amount of ambiguity about not knowing what’s going to happen next, but it keeps you alert to unexpected opportunities and serendipity.”

Framing: Why do we need to learn this?

In an ever-changing and increasingly complex world of work, building a career is about continually discovering how you can apply your strengths, passions, and hard work in the world, to do something that matters.

Supporting video clips:

- [Daniel Gutiérrez on following your passion \(1:51\)](#)
- [Finding the right job for you \(2:45\)](#)

Activity 1: Tap into your WIFI (30-45 minutes)

Resources

- [Tap into your WIFI worksheet from Amba Brown](#)
- Self-assessment handout (included in Appendix)

In this activity, students will complete Amba Brown’s WIFI worksheet. This worksheet is designed to help students identify professional areas they may want to explore, rooted in their interests, dreams, and ambitions. The acronym “WIFI” stands for the following:

W Watch Your Interests

First, students reflect on their primary interests, activities they enjoy, and traits that may inform their career direction.

I Investigate Your Options

Then, students consider the next major step in their life plan, whether traveling the world, pursuing further education, or jumping into a new career straightaway.

F Follow Your Dreams

Next, the student imagines the next five years and considers setting ambitious goals.

I “I’m interested in _____ & I’ll see where it leads me.”

Rather than committing to a single career path, students are asked to explore their interests and remain open-minded about future pathways by setting a broad direction based on their interests.

1. Ask students to consider the questions on the worksheet and jot down their initial thoughts. Students don’t need to answer every question fully right now, but encourage them to write down the ideas that immediately come to mind—no matter how wild or far-fetched they might seem:

- What interests you? List 5 ways you enjoy spending your time.
 - What are your skills? List 5 things you're good at.
 - How would your friends describe you? List 5 ways they'd explain what you're like.
 - If there was no chance you'd fail, what would you do? Anything at all!
2. Bring the class back together, and invite students to share their thoughts, with the aim of establishing a supportive network. Understanding their classmates' aspirations will allow students to help each other as they continue exploring career options.

For example, one student might find a resource that isn't useful to them, but if they recognize that it would be particularly helpful to another student, they can pass it along.

Optional extensions:

- Direct students to [Amba Brown's longer Finding Your Path worksheet](#), which dives deeper into "investigating your options".
- Encourage students to take more time to expand on and refine their initial ideas, and set some SMART goals.

Activity 2: Real people, real pathways (30-45 minutes)

Resources

- Real people, real pathways activity handout for students (included in appendix)
- [I am a scientist profiles \(22 profiles\)](#)
- Video: [A day in the life of Elian, Bicycle Plumber](#)
- Video: [A day in the life of Shirley, Platform Driver](#)
- Video: [A day in the life of Sophie, Entrepreneur](#)
- Video: [A day in the life of Angie, school teacher of technology](#)
- Self-assessment handout (included in Appendix)

In this activity, students will explore professional profiles and reflect on the profiled individuals' traits and accomplishments, and how those traits map to each person's current career. This activity is designed to help students unpack their preconceived

notions about what a career path should look like and start thinking about their own career journey.

1. Introduce your students to the profile collection. Feel free to use the resources provided here, or others of your choosing.
2. Take 5 minutes to review one profile as an example for the class. Feel free to use the questions listed below, which model common questions used in an informational interview.

Common informational interview questions:

- Tell us about your person. What's their current work role?
 - What was the path they took to their current role?
 - What do they like most about their job?
 - What is the most challenging aspect of their role?
 - If you were interested in a job like this one, what qualifications and experience would you need?
3. Invite students to choose a profile and spend a few minutes reviewing it independently. Students don't necessarily need to choose a person working in a field they aspire to now. There is interesting information and inspiration to be gained everywhere. Direct them to the common informational interview questions to focus their attention while reviewing their profile.
 4. Once all the students have had time to review their chosen profile, put them into small groups of three or four. In their groups, students can share what they learned with their groupmates, using the questions above to guide them.
 5. Following the group sharing, bring the class back together to discuss:
 - What did you find most interesting or surprising?
 - How has this changed the way you think about career pathways, in general?
 - How has this changed the way you think about your future career, in particular?

Optional extensions:

- Introduce the online resource, [CareerVillage](#), and encourage students to post a question.
Supporting video clip (3:05): [How Students can get started on CareerVillage](#)
- Highlight the value of continuing to explore career paths by doing informational interviews. Students can use the questions above as a guide. Together, the class may build their own profile collection as a group blog, with each student contributing at least one post.

Activity 3: LinkedIn for students (30 minutes)

Resources

- How to use LinkedIn activity handout for students (included in Appendix)
- [8 things teenagers \(and their parents\) need to know about LinkedIn](#)
- [LinkedIn privacy settings](#)
- Video: [LinkedIn for students: Top five profile to-do's](#)
- [Building a great LinkedIn profile tip sheet](#)
- [LinkedIn profile checklist](#)
- Self-assessment handout (included in Appendix)

In this activity, students will learn about the social media and networking platform, LinkedIn: why it's important (even when you're a student just starting to think about your career) and how best to use it.

1. Summarize what LinkedIn is and how it's valuable even for young people just beginning their career journey. You may use this resource as a guide: [8 things teenagers \(and their parents\) need to know about LinkedIn](#)

Framing tip:

Explain to students that LinkedIn is the world's largest professional network on the internet. They can use LinkedIn to find the right job or internship, connect and strengthen professional relationships, and learn the skills you need to succeed in your career. All they need is an internet-connected device.

A complete LinkedIn profile can help them connect with opportunities by showcasing their unique professional story through experience, skills, and education.

You can also explain to students that building a great reputation, maintaining a portfolio, and participating in a community of professionals are important habits for future career success. Whether you're documenting volunteer service or tracking awards and club activities at school, LinkedIn helps you develop a "showcase" mindset. Once you have that mindset, you're able to have a complete repository of all your accomplishments.

2. Review LinkedIn's [privacy settings for teens](#).
3. Highlight some key tips for building an effective LinkedIn profile, like:
 - Pick a professional picture
 - Write a good headline (120 characters or less)
 - Showcase your education
 - List your experience (organizations, achievements, honors, etc) ● Get recommendations from managers, mentors, teachers, etc.

You can show students this quick supporting video (1:21): [LinkedIn for students: Top five profile todo's](#)

4. Invite students to start building their own LinkedIn profile independently. If students already have a LinkedIn, you can frame this activity as a profile audit to make sure it's set up in the most effective way possible.

Additional resources:

- [Building a great LinkedIn profile tip sheet](#)
 - [LinkedIn profile checklist](#)
5. As students work, check in with individuals to answer questions, provide clarification, or offer suggestions.
 6. **Optional:** Have students share their profiles with a partner to gather inspiration and ideas for improvement.
 7. Encourage students to seek out feedback on their LinkedIn profile from other trusted adults in their lives and remind them that their profile should evolve as they gain more experience.

Lesson Closing

No matter what activity you did (or if you do all three), give students the opportunity to reflect and set a goal for their next steps. These self-assessments will also help you figure out what you need to do next to help them meet the learning objectives and make meaningful progress in exploring and planning their career. Here are some suggestions:

- You can use a tool like [Mentimeter](#) or [Poll Everywhere](#) to do a pulse check. Ask students on a scale of 15 (1 not confident, 5 ready to explore a future career now), how prepared they feel to start exploring and planning for their future career. This information is also helpful for you, as you can use their responses to think about how much more practice they need and whether or not you want to dig deeper into this skill.
- Create a Google Form that gives students a place to reflect and set a goal. Here are some questions you might include:
 - How prepared do you feel to explore and plan your career future?
 - What's your next best step?
 - What do you need more help with?

You can also share additional reflection questions that students can return to throughout their career journey, such as:

- What are your strengths? How can you tell the difference between a weakness and something that just needs a little more effort?
- Do you know what you're good at? If so, how could you do more of it? If not, how could you find out?
- Have you thought about what industries or organizations are looking for people with your strengths and ambitions? What do you know about them? What could you do to learn more?
- The most valuable people bring out the best in others. Who in your life is lifting you up? Who could you reach out to for support? How can you be a support to others?
- How are you building your professional reputation, both intentionally and unintentionally? What would a potential employer see if they Googled you? Are you making thoughtful use of platforms like LinkedIn to promote yourself and connect with people doing work you're interested in?
- What's next for you?

Utilize IBM SkillsBuild's free courses as a follow up to this lesson.

- [Develop Your Brand Using Social Media](#) ○ How will you tell your story? ○ Create your "workplace brand" ○ Create your workplace tagline ○ Where will you plant your workplace brand? ○ How will you make your workplace brand grow?
- [Focus Your Direction with Workplace Research](#) ○ Identify a job role that employers want ○ Turn your skills into job roles ○ Identify things you value in a workplace
 - Find real opportunities now and research what it's like to work there
- [Professional Skills](#) ○ These courses will help you get a handle on the key skills you need to transition successfully from school to work. Take the courses that will help you the most, or take all five courses and the quizzes and you can earn a credential: [Working in a Digital World: Professional Skills](#).

Courses:

- Present with Purpose
- Collaborate Effectively
- Interpersonal Skills
- Deliver Quality Work with Agility
- Solving Problems with Critical and Creative Thinking

*Note: You'll need to register for a free account on [IBM SkillsBuild](#) to access this content.

Lesson 2: How to Build a Stand-Out Resume

Grades:	9-12
Topic:	Resume
Length of lesson:	60 minutes or 1-2 class periods for a full-length lesson, including one of the three activities (25-30 minutes per activity).

Overview

This 60-minute lesson plan has everything you need to teach your students resumewriting skills so they can write resumes that grab employers' attention and, most importantly, lead to interviews.

It includes materials, learning objectives and standards, activities and instructions, and student handouts. We also recommend tech tools that you can use to make the learning experience fun and interactive for your students.

Required learning materials/resources:

- [Resume writing student facing PowerPoint](#)
- Understanding your audience jigsaw handouts (included in Appendix)
- Developing your resume content glow and grow handout (included in Appendix)
- Build your resume handouts (included in Appendix)
- Self-assessment handout
- [Jigsaw instructions](#)
- Tech tool recommendations
- Stopwatch/timer

Learning Objectives:

- Students will learn about the importance of tailoring their resume to their audience.
- Students will draft a resume for a fictional student in response to a sample job posting.
- Students will write accomplishment statements they can use on their resumes.

- Students will learn about three common resume formats, and how to choose which format is best for them.
- Students will draft a complete resume they can continue to refine and tailor.
- Students will gain confidence and feel more comfortable about drafting and tailoring resumes for future job applications.

Common Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.1

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.4

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.2

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.4

Introduction

When students enter the classroom or sign into class online, project the slide that asks the following questions. You can also use a collaborative tool like [Padlet](#) and post the question there:

What is a resume anyway? How are they used and why do they matter?

Invite students to share out. If you use Padlet, give students the opportunity to read each other's responses before they share. If you're teaching in person, you can cold call or ask for volunteers. Online, you can ask students to type in the chat box. As students are sharing, note patterns that come up in their responses.

Once several students share, emphasize that a resume is a document that helps potential employers understand who you are when applying for a job:

“You might think that your resume’s goal is to win you a great job. That’s true in the long run. But in the hiring process, a resume’s greatest impact comes when you first apply for the job. That’s when a company decides whether you’ll be one of a very few applicants who are invited to a job interview.”

Body of Lesson

It's important to format your resume in a way that allows recruiters and hiring managers to easily scan and identify your qualifications as they pertain to a specific job opportunity. They're looking for one thing: how precisely your resume matches the requirements of the job they want to fill.

Recruiters spend an average of about six seconds reviewing a resume before making a decision to: a) continue reading, b) maybe save for later, or c) abandon and move on. And in some companies, the “person” measuring how well you match up isn’t a human at all! It’s a computer program on the lookout for key words and phrases.

Your resume needs to make a great first impression and fast. How can you write a resume that will help you get in the door? How do you get started?

Optional: You may want to show this [video clip](#) (5:54).

Activity 1: Understanding your audience jigsaw (30-45 minutes)

Resources

- Activity handout for students
- Sample job description handout
- Anonymous personal profile handout
- Resume template handout
- Self-assessment handout
- [Jigsaw instructions](#)

In this activity, students will work together in groups of three to explore a scenario. They will practice preparing a resume for a fictional student using three resources: a job description, a personal profile of a potential applicant, and a resume template.

The activity is designed as a [jigsaw](#), which is interactive and holds students accountable for contributing to the work equally. At the end of the activity, the class will work together to develop a rough draft of a resume for the sample applicant.

This is essentially a card-sorting activity. It can be run in an in-person class with paper cards (cut in advance) or cut during class by the students (with scissors provided). It can also be run as a digital activity using an online collaboration tool like [Miro](#).

1. Share with students that the most important things they need to do to prepare a successful resume is to understand what the employer is looking for and then to recognize how they can meet the employer’s needs.
2. Split students into groups of three.

3. Give each student a scenario (samples provided). The scenarios will include:
 - A basic job description
 - A profile of a potential applicant which includes both relevant and irrelevant details, all written as independent statements
 - A resume template including all the typical sections with descriptions
4. Explain the [jigsaw instructions](#). Each student is responsible for reading and thinking about one of the documents (job description, personal profile, and resume template). Note: If you are teaching online, put each group in a different breakout room so they can work together. Students can use a Google Doc to collaborate.
5. Students work independently for five minutes to familiarize themselves with the information on their documents.
6. When five minutes are up, each person summarizes what they read and what it made them think about with the rest of the group.
7. The group works together to determine what information should be included on the applicant's resume, what information should be excluded, and how it might be organized according to the template. The group can select appropriate statements and move them around into the various sections of the template.
8. Bring the class back together to share their ideas. Why did they make the choices they did? Document their conclusions by building a draft resume for the applicant in real time.

Optional extension (15 minutes):

- Ask the class: what if this same applicant applied to a different position? Display a second job description, different from the first in important ways, but still a fit to the applicant's goals and experience.
- Work together to edit the initial draft. What stays, what goes, how might the information be reorganized? Compare and contrast the two versions to emphasize the importance of understanding your audience and tailoring your resume to fit the opportunity.

Activity 2: Developing your content glow and grow (30-45 minutes)

Resources

- Activity handout for students (included in Appendix)
- Video: [“Get hired” clip](#)
- Self-assessment handout (included in Appendix)

In this activity, students will learn about “accomplishment statements”, including a helpful formula for writing them. They’ll learn why these types of statements are important and useful when you’re building your resume because they show potential employers what you did and the impact of your actions.

Students will review examples of accomplishment statements, practice drafting their own, then pair up to give feedback on each other’s statements.

Framing tip:

Explain to students: the best way to show an employer what you can do for them is to tell them what you’ve already accomplished. That’s why it’s so important to not only tell potential hiring managers what you've done in your past roles, but also the impact of your actions. Make every word count!

Optional: You may want to show this [video clip](#) (3:04).

1. Explain what Accomplishment Statements are and how they can be used in a resume to demonstrate your qualifications:

“Accomplishment statements let employers know about your unique achievements. Beyond a simple list of duties or responsibilities, accomplishment statements show how your work created an impact.”

2. Share this formula to develop strong bullet points: What + So What?
 - What = The task you accomplished or were responsible for
 - So What? = The result or impact of your actions, or the rationale behind what you did

Explain that students should use specific examples and quantify results when they can to show the scope of their work.

3. Review a few examples that reflect the importance of transferable skills:

Peer Math Tutor: “Helped fellow high school students understand and apply key math concepts and prepare for their exams. Succeeded in helping my tutees raise their math grades by an average of 20%.”

Assistant Childcare Supervisor: “Established a safe, enjoyable, and enriching environment for children aged 5-12 by designing, preparing, and leading a variety of indoor and outdoor activities, while following appropriate safety protocols.”

Blood Center Volunteer: “Designed a PowerPoint presentation and a poster summarizing how and why to participate in the local blood drive, to raise awareness about the importance of blood donation in our community.

4. Invite students to think about one or two of their relevant experiences, then draft some accomplishment Statements that demonstrate their qualifications powerfully and succinctly. Encourage them to use the ability verbs on the activity handout.
5. Pair students together to share their draft Accomplishment Statements. Ask students to give feedback (a glow and a grow), keeping in mind the What + So What? Formula.

Optional extension (15 minutes):

- Give students 10 minutes to review sample job postings that sound interesting to them, even if they’re not ready to apply for jobs yet. Point them to specific sources or provide a sample of entry-level job postings from various industries. Ask them to read the job postings carefully, paying particular attention to how the employer describes their ideal candidate. They can look in the qualifications, duties, and summary sections for clues.
- Ask students to then reflect on which of their strengths, skills and experiences overlap with employers’ wish lists? They might draw from their paid and volunteer work, as well as school and personal life:

“Which of your attributes set you apart from other candidates? Which attributes are worth your effort to develop further? Set some SMART goals for yourself.”

Activity 3: Build your resume (30 minutes)

Resources

- Activity handout for students (included in Appendix)
- Resume template handout (included in Appendix)
- Resume formats article (included in Appendix)
- Resume Genius resource (included in Appendix)
- Self-assessment handout (included in Appendix)

This activity gives students an opportunity to build their resume based on the three most common resume formats: chronological, functional, and combination. Each of the three formats is summarized [in this article](#) (you’ll also find samples of each resume format in that article).

The **chronological resume** format is what the majority of people use to create their own resume. Chronological resumes begin with your contact details and resume introduction, but then immediately move into your most recent work experience. Because hiring managers care a lot about your work experience (if you have any), featuring this information near the top helps them evaluate your application quickly.

The **functional resume** format focuses on your relevant job skills. Unlike a chronological resume, the functional format ignores when and where you learned your skills. Instead of focusing on your work history, functional resumes are used to list your strongest resume skills at the top.

A **combination resume** is a blend of the chronological and functional resume formats. Combination resumes:

- Lead with a core skills section (like a functional resume)
- End with a detailed work experience section (like a chronological resume)

1. Summarize how the three main resume formats compare and contrast and share some basic formatting tips. The flowchart infographic from [this article](#) is a simple tool that can help students make an informed decision about format.

2. Invite students to start drafting a resume that demonstrates their strongest skills and most relevant experiences. They could do this online using a tool like [Resume Genius](#), or with a guided template in google docs, or with a hardcopy template (as in the first activity in this lesson plan).

Framing tip:

Remind students to consider the “What + So What?” formula (outlined in the second activity) as they work on drafting accomplishments for their resume:

- What = The task you accomplished or were responsible for
 - So What? = The result or impact of your actions, or the rationale behind what you did
3. As students work, check in with individuals to answer questions, provide clarification, or offer suggestions. If appropriate, have students share their resumes with each other to gather inspiration and ideas for improvement. Encourage students to seek out feedback from other adults in their lives.

Lesson Closing

Resource

- Self-assessment handout (included in Appendix)

No matter which activity you did, give students the opportunity to reflect and set a goal for their next steps. These self-assessments will also help you figure out what you need to do next to help them meet the learning objectives and grow stronger in resume-writing skills. Here are some suggestions:

- You can use a tool like [Mentimeter](#) or [Poll Everywhere](#) to do a pulse check. Ask students on a scale of 15 (1 not confident, 5 ready to tailor their resume now), how prepared they feel to draft and tailor their resumes for potential employers. This information is also helpful for you, as you can use their responses to think about how much more guidance they need and whether or not you want to dig deeper into this skill.
- Create a Google Form that gives students a place to reflect and set a goal. Here are some questions you might include:

- How prepared do you feel to draft and tailor resumes for potential employers?
 - What aspect of the resume-writing process do you feel most confident about?
 - What part of your resume do you want to work on next?
 - What do you need more help with?
- Encourage students to continually assess their resumes and adapt them as their goals change and as they gain experience. Remind them to consider format and content. Here are some questions they can ask themselves:
 - Will my resume stand out in a pile?
 - Have I considered the employer’s perspective?
 - Have I shown the employer I can do the job?
 - Do the headings I use and their order reflect what is most important to the position?
 - Do my bullet points include details about the quality and impact of my past work—the “So what?”
 - Can I say the same thing with fewer words?
 - Is it free of spelling and grammar errors?
 - Have I asked someone to proofread it and offer feedback?
 - Is my name and key contact information up-to-date and clearly visible on every page?
 - Is the text (font and size) easy to read?
 - Is there enough white space?
 - Is my formatting consistent?

Utilize IBMSkillsBuild's free courses as a follow up to this lesson.

- [Create a Great Professional Resume](#) ○ Determine the goals of your resume ○ Ensure your resume makes a good impression ○ Create the different sections of your resume ○ Fine-tune your resume
- [Improve Your Resume Writing with Generative AI](#) ○ Identify the rules to follow to write effective prompts to generate focused and accurate results from an AI language model
 - Follow the steps to effectively write and refine a series of prompts for generative AI for your resume
 - Demonstrate the steps to effectively write and refine your resume
- [Professional Skills](#) ○ These courses will help you get a handle on the key skills you need to transition successfully from school to work. Take the courses that will help you the most, or take all five courses and the quizzes and you can earn a credential: [Working in a Digital World: Professional Skills](#).

Courses:

- Present with Purpose
- Collaborate Effectively
- Interpersonal Skills
- Deliver Quality Work with Agility
- Solving Problems with Critical and Creative Thinking

*Note: You'll need to register for a free account on [IBMSkillsBuild](#) to access this content.

Lesson 3: How to prepare students for interviews

Grades:	9-12
Topic:	Interviews
Length of lesson:	60 minutes or 1-2 class periods for a full-length lesson, including one of the three activities (25-30 minutes per activity).

Overview

If you're here, it means you're looking for ways to teach your high school students professional skills. This 60minute lesson plan has everything you need to teach your students interviewing skills so they're ready to land that summer internship or nail their first job interview.

It includes materials, learning objectives and standards, activities and instructions, and student handouts. We also recommend tech tools that you can use to make the learning experience fun and interactive for your students.

Required learning materials/resources:

- [How to prepare students for interviews PowerPoint](#)
- Understanding your audience jigsaw handouts (included in Appendix)
- Who do you think you are? Elevator pitch handouts (included in Appendix)
- How to ace your next interview fishbowl handouts (included in Appendix)
- Video: [How to answer, "tell me about yourself?"](#)
- Video: [How to give an elevator pitch](#)
- Written elevator pitch examples (included in Appendix)
- [Jigsaw instructions](#)
- [Fishbowl instructions](#)
- Self-assessment handout (included in Appendix)
- Tech tool recommendations
- Stopwatch/timer

Learning Objectives:

- Students will prepare answers to commonly asked interview questions.
- Students will practice answering commonly asked interview questions.
- Students will write and deliver an elevator pitch.

- Students will gain confidence and feel more comfortable about preparing for future interviews.

Common Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1b
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1c
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1d
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.3

Introduction

When students enter the classroom or sign into class online, project the slide that has this scenario. You can also use a collaborative tool like [Padlet](#) and post the question there.

Imagine that you are going to an interview. The hiring manager says, “Tell me about yourself.” How do you answer? Take five minutes to write down what you would say.

1. Invite students to share out. If you use Padlet, give students the opportunity to read each other’s responses before they share. If you’re teaching in person, you can cold call or ask for volunteers. Online, you can ask students to type in the chat box. As students are sharing, note patterns that come up in their responses.
2. Once several students share, ask the class if this question was hard to answer? Why or why not? Ask them if they felt prepared to answer it. Show students this [video](#) to dig deeper into the debrief if you find it useful and have time.

Framing: Why do we need to learn this?

It’s likely that many students will find this hard or feel put on the spot. It’s not always easy to talk about ourselves. Where do we begin? What’s important to share? How do we describe ourselves without sounding arrogant? Taking the time to sit down, think, and prepare a thoughtful response to questions like, “why are you a good fit for this job?” and “where do you see yourself in five years?” helps us become more self-aware.

Share with students that they’ll soon have the opportunity to interview for jobs and/or schools. Share that you want to teach them how to prepare and give them the chance to practice in class, so they feel ready and confident when the time comes.

Activity 1: Let's get prepared for interviews jigsaw (30 minutes)

Resources

- Activity handout for students (included in Appendix)
- Sample job description handout (included in Appendix)
- Sample company description handout (included in Appendix)
- Common interview questions handout (included in Appendix)
- Self-assessment handout (included in Appendix)

In this activity, students will work together in groups of three to explore a professional scenario. They will practice preparing for an interview and have three resources to work with: a job description, a company description, and a list of common interviewing questions.

The activity is designed as a [jigsaw](#), which is interactive and holds students accountable for contributing to the work equally. At the end of the activity, the class will work together to develop a checklist for interview preparation (there is also a sample checklist in the activity description and the slide deck).

1. Share with students that one of the most important things they need to do for a successful interview is to prepare and that they are going to do an activity where they practice preparation.

Framing tip:

Remind your students of the importance of going into interviews prepared. Reassure them that even though some of these practice exercises might feel awkward at first, everyone is here to help each other out. And that this kind of practice will lead them to greater self-awareness. Remind them that these activities are all about helping their future selves feel confident and ready for job interviews when the time comes.

2. Split students into groups of three.
3. Give each student a scenario. The scenarios will include:
 - A job description.
 - A company description.
 - Common interview questions.

Common interview questions:

- What is your greatest strength?
 - What would your teachers say about you?
 - Why should we hire you?
 - Where do you see yourself in five years?
4. Explain the [jigsaw instructions](#). Each student is responsible for reading and thinking about one of the documents (job description, company description, and interview questions). Note: If you are teaching online, put each group in a different breakout room so they can work together. Students can use a Google Doc to collaborate.
 5. Students work independently for five minutes to familiarize themselves with the information on their documents.
 6. When five minutes are up, each person summarizes what they read and what it made them think about with the rest of the group.
 7. The group works together to come up with answers to the interview questions.
 8. Bring the class back together, and pose the question: what do we need to do to prepare for interviews?
 9. Work together to draft an interview preparation checklist. Here are some ideas for what the checklist might look like once you've co-created it together

Interview preparation checklist:

- Research the company.
- Read the job description.
- Prepare responses to common interview questions.
- Practice your responses to these questions.
- Plan your outfit.
- Make sure you know how long it will take you to get to the company or, if you are interviewing online, what information and tools you need to log in.

Activity 2: Who do you think you are? Elevator pitch (30 minutes)

Resources

- Activity handout for students (included in Appendix)
- Video: How to make an elevator pitch
- 10 elevator pitch written examples
- Self-assessment handout (included in Appendix)

This activity is a great way to get students thinking, talking, writing, and speaking. Students will learn what an elevator pitch is and write their own. There are a lot of supplementary materials that you can use to show them examples, both video and written. There's also a list of writing and delivery tips. Students will practice delivering their pitch and use glows and grows to give and get feedback.

1. Circle back to the **Do Now** and ask students to have their responses close by.
2. Explain that an interview is a chance to make a strong first impression, but in order to do that, you have to be prepared. One way to prepare is to write an elevator pitch—or a quick synopsis of your background and experience.

Framing tip:

Remind your students of the importance of going into interviews prepared. Reassure them that even though some of these practice exercises might feel awkward at first, everyone is here to help each other out. And that this kind of practice will lead them to greater self-awareness. Remind them that these activities are all about helping their future selves feel confident and ready for job interviews when the time comes.

3. Tell students that an elevator pitch needs to be short (30-60 seconds).
4. Share this list of elevator pitch writing tips with your students.

Elevator Pitch Writing Tips:

- Keep it brief. Don't tell your whole life story. Give a short recap of who you are and what you do.

- Be persuasive and positive. Like a strong thesis statement, you want to get the hiring manager’s attention. Focus on what you want to do—not what you don’t.
 - Mention your goals. Get to the point and say what you’re looking for.
 - Know your audience. Research the industry and company and notice the language they use when they talk about their work, and write your elevator pitch using that language.
5. Share an example. You can share a [video](#) or [written examples](#) on the slides.
 6. Students write their elevator pitch.
 7. Students will pair up with another student and give their pitch.
 8. Ask students to give each feedback (a glow and a grow) using the Elevator Pitch Writing Tips as a guide. Students can also use this list of criteria for how to deliver a strong elevator pitch.

Elevator Pitch Delivery Tips:

- Don’t speak too fast.
 - Avoid filler words “like,” “um.”
 - Deliver your pitch with energy and enthusiasm.
 - Avoid a monotone delivery and use expression.
 - Make eye contact.
9. There are a lot of different ways you can extend this activity. You can ask students to make a video of themselves and then watch their elevator pitch. They can set a goal for areas they want to keep practicing and improving on. You can give students opportunities to keep practicing their pitch with each other and giving and getting feedback.

Optional Do Now Recap (5 minutes)

In a subsequent class, ask students to answer: Did you have a chance to practice your elevator pitch outside of class? How did it go? What did you learn?

Activity 3: Answer today, ace your interview tomorrow fishbowl (30 minutes)

Resources

- Activity handout for students (included in Appendix)
- Common interview questions handout (included in Appendix)
- Self-assessment handout (included in Appendix)

This activity gives students an opportunity to practice answering interview questions and observe their peers' answering questions. It's set-up as a fishbowl or inner/outer circle, so students participate and observe. Because an interview involves both verbal and non-verbal communication, it's helpful for students to speak and watch. By the end of the activity, students will have a better understanding of the best practices for answering interview questions and more confidence.

1. Tell your students that one of the most effective ways to prepare for an interview is to practice the questions that hiring managers commonly ask.

Framing tip:

Remind your students of the importance of going into interviews prepared. Reassure them that even though some of these practice exercises might feel awkward at first, everyone is here to help each other out. And that this kind of practice will lead them to greater self-awareness. Remind them that these activities are all about helping their future selves feel confident and ready for job interviews when the time comes.

2. Explain that in this activity, they will have a chance to practice answering questions and observe their classmates answering questions using a [fishbowl](#) or inner/outer circle.
3. Display the slide that has these questions. Here are additional questions to choose from if you want to swap out or modify.
 - What is your greatest strength?
 - What would your teachers say about you?
 - Why should we hire you?
 - Where do you see yourself in five years?

4. Divide students into two groups. Determine which group will be in the inner circle (answering questions) and the students who will be in the outer circle (observing) first.
5. Set a timer for seven minutes and invite students to read the questions and jot down notes (7-10 minutes)
6. Lower the stakes for students. Explain that the purpose of this activity is to start to figure out some of the more effective ways to answer questions at an interview. In addition, we are often unaware of our body language and tone, so it's helpful to watch and notice what people do when they deliver a strong answer.
7. Share with students that when they are in the inner circle, they will answer questions, and when they are in the outer circle, they will observe their classmates.
8. Depending on class size, decide how much time you'll spend. Plan to spend at least 10-15 minutes in the circle before you swap.
9. If you're teaching online, stay in the Zoom room, and ask students in the outer circle to mute themselves. They can take notes in the chat. If you are teaching in person, set-up your classroom, so the chairs are arranged in two circles, one outer and one inner.
10. Now is your chance to facilitate the process and observe. Ask questions and call on students. Keep track of time.
11. Once both groups have been in the inner and outer circle, bring everyone back together for a debrief. Here are some questions to ask:
 - When you were in the outer circle, what did you observe your classmates saying and/or doing when they gave a strong answer?
 - When you were in the inner circle answering questions, how did it feel? What questions were easier to answer than others?
12. Share with students that you will do this activity again so they can keep practicing, and that the more they practice, the more confident and prepared they will feel.

Lesson Closing

No matter what activity you did (or if you do all three), give students the opportunity to reflect and set a goal. These self-assessments will also help you figure out what you need to do next to help them meet the learning objectives/grow stronger in interviewing skills. Here are some suggestions:

- You can use a tool like [Mentimeter](#) or [Poll Everywhere](#) to do a pulse check. Ask students on a scale of 1-5 (1 not confident, 5 ready for the interview now), how prepared they feel for interviews. This information is also helpful for you, as you can use their responses to think about how much more practice they need and whether or not you want to dig deeper into this skill.
- Create a form that gives students a place to reflect and set a goal. Here are some questions you might include:
 - What do you feel your interviewing strengths are?
 - What do you want to work on before you are interviewed? ○
 - What do you need more practice with?

Utilize IBMSkillsBuild’s free courses as a follow up to this lesson.

- [Ace Your Professional Interview](#)
- [Professional Skills](#) ○ These courses will help you get a handle on the key skills you need to transition successfully from school to work. Take the courses that will help you the most, or take all five courses and the quizzes and you can earn a credential: [Working in a Digital World: Professional Skills](#).

Courses:

- Present with Purpose
- Collaborate Effectively
- Interpersonal Skills
- Deliver Quality Work with Agility
- Solving Problems with Critical and Creative Thinking

*Note: You'll need to register for a free account on [IBMSkillsBuild](#) to access this content.

Power your future in tech

About the program

IBM SkillsBuild is a **free** education program focused on **underrepresented communities** in tech, that helps adult learners, and high school and university students and faculty, develop **valuable new skills and access career opportunities**. The program includes an online platform that is complemented by customized practical learning experiences delivered in collaboration with a global network of partners.

Priority populations include: underrepresented minorities, women, economically disadvantaged, veterans, neurodivergent, refugees.

IBM SkillsBuild Serves



High school students & teachers



Academia (students & faculty)



Adult learners

Our Offering

Open version → **Enhanced partner version may also include:**



1,000

courses



20

languages



- Workshops
- Expert conversations with IBM Coaches and Mentors
- Project based learning



- Access to IBM experts and resources enable faculty to successfully deliver training



- Access to IBM software (Cloud credits, SaaS)



- Paid content covered by IBM e.g. Coursera, Udemy, etc.
- Specialized support by the partner through the learning process/experience
- Connecting to career opportunities

Skills

(Technical & Workplace Readiness)



Cybersecurity



Data



Cloud



Workforce Readiness

(Digital World, Job Applications, Interviewing)



Information Technology



Software Engineering



Artificial Intelligence



Ways of Working

(Agile, Design Thinking)

Why IBM

FREE ACCESS

Personalized learning paths

Content in local languages

Verified digital credentials

Learning paths aligned to real job roles
(e.g. cybersecurity analyst)

Train in technology
(not only on IBM products)

Global partnerships bring learning to life

Supported by IBM global volunteer network

Start today, learn more at skillsbuild.org

IBM is committed to skilling 30 million people by 2030



Appendix

Self-Assessment (5 minutes)

You can use this handout to reflect on the activity/ies and set goals for yourself.

On a scale of 1-5, how prepared do you feel to start exploring and planning for your future career?

(Circle one: 1 = not confident, 5 = ready to plan right now)

1

2

3

4

5

What do you think is your next best step?

What do you need more help with?

Additional reflection questions:

- What are your strengths? How can you tell the difference between a weakness and something that just needs a little more effort?
- Do you know what you're good at? If so, how could you do more of it? If not, how could you find out?

- Have you thought about what industries or organizations are looking for people with your strengths and ambitions? What do you know about them? What could you do to learn more?
- The most valuable people bring out the best in others. Who in your life is lifting you up? Who could you reach out to for support? How can you be a support to others?
- How are you building your professional reputation, both intentionally and unintentionally? What would a potential employer see if they Googled you? Are you making thoughtful use of platforms like LinkedIn to promote yourself and connect with people doing work you're interested in?
- What's next for you?

How to use LinkedIn (30 minutes)

In this activity, you'll learn more about the social media and networking platform, [LinkedIn](#): why it's important (even when you're a student just starting to think about your career) and how best to use it.

Why is LinkedIn important?

LinkedIn is the world's largest professional network on the internet. You can use LinkedIn to find the right job or internship, connect and strengthen professional relationships, and learn the skills you need to succeed in your career. All you need is an internet-connected device.

A complete LinkedIn profile can help you connect with opportunities by showcasing your unique professional story through experience, skills, and education.

On another note, building a great reputation, maintaining a portfolio, and participating in a community of professionals are all important habits for future career success. Whether you're documenting volunteer service or tracking awards and club activities at school, LinkedIn helps you develop a "showcase" mindset. Once you have that mindset, you're able to have a complete collection of all your accomplishments.

Activity instructions:

1. Review these key tips for building an effective LinkedIn profile:

- Pick a professional picture
- Write a good headline (120 characters or less)
- Showcase your education
- List your experience (organizations, achievements, honors, etc) ● Get recommendations from managers, mentors, teachers, etc.

2. Watch this quick video (1:21): [LinkedIn for Students: Top Five Profile To-Do's](#)

3. Start building your own LinkedIn profile. If you already have a LinkedIn, audit your profile using the tips and resources to make sure it's set up in the most effective way possible. You can use these additional resources to guide you:

- [Building a great LinkedIn profile tip sheet](#)
- [LinkedIn profile checklist](#)

Real people, real pathways (30 minutes)

In this activity, you'll explore professional profiles and reflect on the person's traits and accomplishments, and how those traits map to their current career. This activity is designed to help you unpack your preconceived notions about what a career path *should* look like, and start thinking about your own career journey.

1. Choose one profile from the provided professional profiles and spend a few minutes reviewing.

Remember, you don't necessarily need to choose a person working in a field you aspire to now—there's interesting information and inspiration to be gained everywhere! Consider the following informational interview questions as you're looking at the profile:

- Tell us about your person. What's their current work role?
- What was the path they took to their current role?
- What do they like most about their job?
- What is the most challenging aspect of their role?
- If you were interested in a job like this one, what qualifications and experience would you need?

2. Get with your small group and share what you learned with your groupmates, using the questions above to guide you. Consider the following questions and jot down notes:

- What did you find most interesting or surprising?
- How has this changed the way you think about career pathways, in general?
- How has this changed the way you think about your future career, in particular?

Build your resume (30 minutes)

In this activity, you'll work on actually building your resume based on the three most common resume formats: chronological, functional, and combination.

The **chronological resume** format is what the majority of people use to create their own resume. Chronological resumes begin with your contact details and resume introduction, but then immediately move into your most recent work experience. Because hiring managers care a lot about your work experience (if you have any), featuring this information near the top helps them evaluate your application quickly.

The **functional resume** format focuses on your relevant job skills. Unlike a chronological resume, the functional format ignores when and where you learned your skills. Instead of focusing on your work history, functional resumes are used to list your strongest resume skills at the top.

A **combination resume** is a blend of the chronological and functional resume formats. Combination resumes:

- Lead with a core skills section (like a functional resume)
- End with a detailed work experience section (like a chronological resume)

Start drafting a resume that demonstrates your strongest skills and most relevant experiences using the provided template.

Consider the “What + So What?” formula as you work on drafting accomplishment statements for your resume:

- What = The task you accomplished or were responsible for
- So What? = The result or impact of your actions, or the rationale behind what you did

Here are a few examples:

Peer Math Tutor: “Helped fellow high school students understand and apply key math concepts and prepare for their exams. Succeeded in helping my tutees raise their math grades by an average of 20%.”

Assistant Childcare Supervisor: “Established a safe, enjoyable, and enriching environment for children aged 5-12 by designing, preparing, and leading a variety of indoor and outdoor activities, while following appropriate safety protocols.”

Blood Center Volunteer: “Designed a PowerPoint presentation and a poster summarizing how and why to participate in the local blood drive, to raise awareness about the importance of blood donation in our community.

Developing your resume content (30 minutes)

The best way to show an employer what you can do for them is to tell them what you’ve already accomplished. That’s why it’s so important to not only tell potential hiring managers what you’ve done in your past roles, but also the impact of your actions.

In this activity, you’ll write accomplishment statements for your resume and review your statements with a partner.

What’s an accomplishment statement?

Your accomplishment statements should follow a formula: What + So What?

- What = The task you accomplished or were responsible for
- So What? = The result or impact of your actions, or the rationale behind what you did

You should use specific examples and quantify results when you can to show the scope of your work. Here are a few examples:

Peer Math Tutor: “Helped fellow high school students understand and apply key math concepts, and prepare for their exams. Succeeded in helping my tutees raise their math grades by an average of 20%.”

Assistant Childcare Supervisor: “Established a safe, enjoyable, and enriching environment for children aged 5-12 by designing, preparing, and leading a variety of indoor and outdoor activities, while following appropriate safety protocols.”

Blood Center Volunteer: “Designed a PowerPoint presentation and a poster summarizing how and why to participate in the local blood drive, to raise awareness about the importance of blood donation in our community.

1. Draft your accomplishment statements using the prompts below.

- Look over each ability (management, communication, etc.). For each ability, highlight or circle up to three verbs that you could apply to something you’ve done in school or at work.
- Write a short sentence using highlighted verbs to describe what you did and how it turned out.

For example:

“I organized a successful phone campaign to sell ads in the school newspaper”
 “I collaborated with a graphic artist to create a new phone app.”

Highlight up to three ability verbs...	
Management	delegated developed directed evaluated improved increased organized planned produced reviewed scheduled coordinated
... to describe things you’ve accomplished	

--

Highlight up to three ability verbs...	
Communication	arranged collaborated corresponded developed directed drafted edited persuaded promoted publicized recruited translated
... to describe things you've accomplished	

Highlight up to three ability verbs...

Research	clarified collected critiqued evaluated examined identified interpreted
	interviewed organized reviewed summarized
... to describe things you've accomplished	

Highlight up to three ability verbs...	
Technical	assembled built designed maintained operated programmed remodeled repaired
... to describe things you've accomplished	

--

Highlight up to three ability verbs...	
Creative	acted created customized designed directed established integrated
	introduced originated performed planned
... to describe things you've accomplished	

Highlight up to three ability verbs...

Helping	assisted coached demonstrated educated familiarized guided motivated referred represented
... to describe things you've accomplished	
Highlight up to three ability verbs...	
Organizing	approved arranged collected compiled implemented monitored
	organized prepared
... to describe things you've accomplished	

2. Get with a partner and share your draft Accomplishment Statements. Give feedback on your partner's accomplishment statements, keeping in mind the What + So What? formula. Get feedback on your own statements.

Feedback notes:

Self-Assessment (5 minutes)

You can use this handout to reflect on the activity/ies and set goals for yourself.

On a scale of 1-5, how prepared do you feel to draft and tailor your resume for a potential employer?

(Circle one: 1 = not confident, 5 = ready to write my resume right now)

1

2

3

4

5

What aspect of the resume-writing process do you feel most confident about?

What part of your resume do you want to work on next?

What do you need more help with?

Other questions to keep in mind as you work on your resume:

- Will my resume stand out in a pile?
- Have I considered the employer’s perspective?
- Have I shown the employer I can do the job?
- Do the headings I use and their order reflect what is most important to the position?
- Do my bullet points include details about the quality and impact of my past work—the “So what?”
- Can I say the same thing with fewer words?
- Is it free of spelling and grammar errors?
- Have I asked someone to proofread it and offer feedback?
- Is my name and key contact information up-to-date and clearly visible on every page?
- Is the text (font and size) easy to read?
- Is there enough white space?

Your Name



Your Cell Phone Number



Your Email Address

[BE SURE TO DELETE ALL THE INSTRUCTIONS INSIDE SQUARE BRACKETS!]

[Optional Summary: adjust it as you apply for different types of jobs]

Who you are, what you want to accomplish in your career, and how that is a match for the specific job you are applying for.

Education

[Enter your high school experience here, in reverse order]

High School name, class of [date], [GPA if B average or above]

- [optional] What you did and a good outcome that relates to this job opportunity
- [Add more bullet points as needed]

[Add previous high schools and outcomes if appropriate]

[If you are applying for a technical job or one that requires specific courses, add relevant classes you've taken, online courses, or other certifications you've earned]

Experience

[Enter past jobs, internships, work site visits, mentoring, and any career themed portfolios or class projects here. If you haven't done any of these yet, delete this section]

Your most recent experience, date range

Most advanced position you held

- What you did in this position, and a good outcome that relates to this job opportunity

[Add previous experiences, positions, and outcomes if appropriate.]

Skills & Interests

[List any skills you didn't cover above that would be relevant to this position. This is a great place to include volunteering, clubs, participation in afterschool groups, or other experiences that may be relevant to employers]

- A skill that relates to this job opportunity
- [Add more skills as appropriate]

Activities

[Only include this section if you're just starting out and didn't have much to write in the other sections of your resume]

- Name of activity that relates to this job opportunity, activity agency
- [Add more activities as appropriate]

Awards & Achievements

[If you have received any awards or achievements for what you've done, list them here. Otherwise delete this section]

- Name of Award that relates to this job opportunity, awarding agency, date
- [Add more awards as appropriate]

Watson AI Engineer - High School Internship

Role and responsibilities

Are you interested in becoming a part of the future of Artificial Intelligence in business and industry? Want to learn, push boundaries, spark ideas? Then join us on the Watson AI team and we will encourage you to explore new and innovative things and deliver work that will capture people's imagination.

Join us and be part of our high school internship program for future technology leaders. The Watson AI High School Internship Program is for top-performing and talented rising high school seniors. The program aims to develop, accelerate and inform your education and career paths through one-to-one mentoring, training and hands-on experience.

You will work with Watson engineers in a wide range of positions including, but not limited to development, IT and visual design. The interns will use Watson services to implement selected AI projects. You'll participate alongside the Watson engineers and data scientists as they build Watson AI services and solve customer problems. The high school internship position is expected to start in January 2022.

Required technical and professional expertise

We are looking for rising high school seniors from all backgrounds who meet the following criteria:

- Demonstrated history of achievement in academics and related extracurricular activities.
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills. You can work well in a team environment and speak publicly.
- Passionate about technology, learning, providing solutions to challenging problems.

Preferred Technical and Professional Expertise

- 6 months to 1 year experience in Applying Problem Solving Techniques

About Business Unit

Digitization is accelerating the ongoing evolution of business, and clouds—public, private, and hybrid—enable companies to extend their existing infrastructure and integrate across systems. IBM Cloud provides the security, control, and visibility that our clients have come to expect. We are working to provide the right tools and environment to combine all of our client's data, no matter where it resides, to respond to changing market dynamics.

Being You @ IBM

IBM is committed to creating a diverse environment and is proud to be an equal opportunity employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, national origin, genetics, disability, age, or veteran status. IBM is also committed to compliance with all fair employment practices regarding citizenship and immigration status.

This sample job description is based on a real internship description from IBM posted in 2019.

This profile includes statements about a fictitious high school student named Leah Valdovinos.

Leah Valdovinos

Cheese Louise Burgers Server,
2018 - 2019

- Provided prompt and friendly customer service at a popular and busy restaurant
- Managed cash and credit card transactions using a point of sale system ● Trusted to train new hires

Passionate problem-solver and aspiring programmer interested in using AI tools to solve real business problems

Bilingual in Spanish and English

Johnson City Blood Donation Center
Marketing and Promotions Volunteer, 2020 - Present

- Promote donation events and recruit new donors in my local community
- Raise awareness about the importance of blood donation on social media
- Designed a slide presentation and a poster that summarized how and why to participate in the local blood drive

Proud Democrat

Destination Imagination
Tournament Participant, 2015 - 2021

- Competed as part of a team for six years running at Destination Imagination's state-level event, a celebration of creativity, collaboration, and innovation
- Won first place in our category in 2018 and 2020, and received the Renaissance Award in 2020, a rare honor that recognizes outstanding skill in engineering and design

Relevant Coursework

- Advanced Computer Science
- Student Leadership
- Digital Media

Ernest Moore High School
High School Diploma, expected June 2021

Bailey Middle School

Graduated in 2017, with a GPA of 3.8

Earnest Moore Coding Club

Club Member, 2019 - Present

- Teach new club members advanced programming techniques
- Compete as a team on community, state, and national programming challenges
- Led our team to win third place in the 2019 TechTogether Hackathon

Eldest in a family of three, regularly responsible for caring for younger siblings

Coding skills: Java, Python, HTML, CSS

Lifetime member of the The Brute Hornets Fan Club, and eight-time Fan of the Month. Go Hornets!

Run at least 8 miles twice per week

Leah Valdovinos 123-456-7890

leah.valdoninos@mymail.com

linkedin.com/in/leahvaldovinos

Type 70+ words per minute

Responsible and ambitious student, seeking to apply my customer service experience and excellent time management skills to the internship at your company

Self-employed Tutor, 2019 - Present

- Provide tutoring in Computer Science and Spanish to fellow high school students
- Have grown my client base steadily over three years through targeted promotion and word-of-mouth referrals
- Monitor tutees' improvements through a tracking spreadsheet, succeeded in helping my tutees raise their grades by an average of 20%

Additional skills: Communication, Public speaking, Customer service, Leadership and planning Received the Earnest Moore Community Citizenship Award in 2020 for most volunteer hours served

Understand your audience (30 minutes)

In this activity, you'll work together in groups of three to build a resume for a fictional student. You and your groupmates will have three resources to work with:

- a job description,
- an anonymous personal profile, and
- a resume template.

Each of you should be responsible for reading and thinking about *one* of these three resources. Hint: Take notes here and / or open up a new Google Doc to collaborate.

Step 1: Decide who will review which resource.

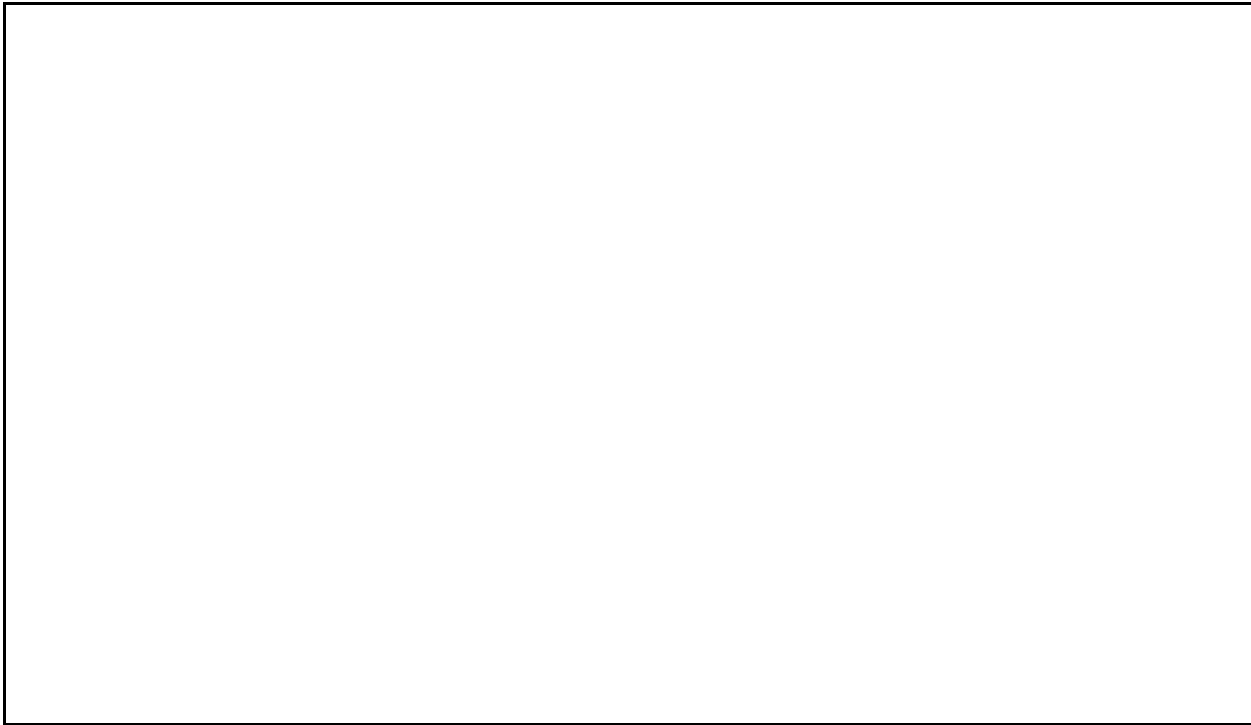
Step 2: Split up and take 5 minutes to get familiar with the information in your resource.

Step 3: Come back together and explain to the group what you read and what you think about what you read. Think about the questions: Which parts of the student's profile should go on their resume? Why?

Step 4: Take the remaining time to fill out the resume template with statements from the fictional student's profile.

Job description notes:

Fictional profile notes:



Resume template notes:



Answer Today, Ace the Interview Tomorrow

(30 minutes)

In this fishbowl activity, you'll have the chance to practice answering common interview questions and observe your classmates answering questions, too. When you're in the inner circle, you'll answer questions. When you're in the outer circle, you'll observe your classmates.

Step 1: Review the featured questions, consider your responses, and jot down your notes.

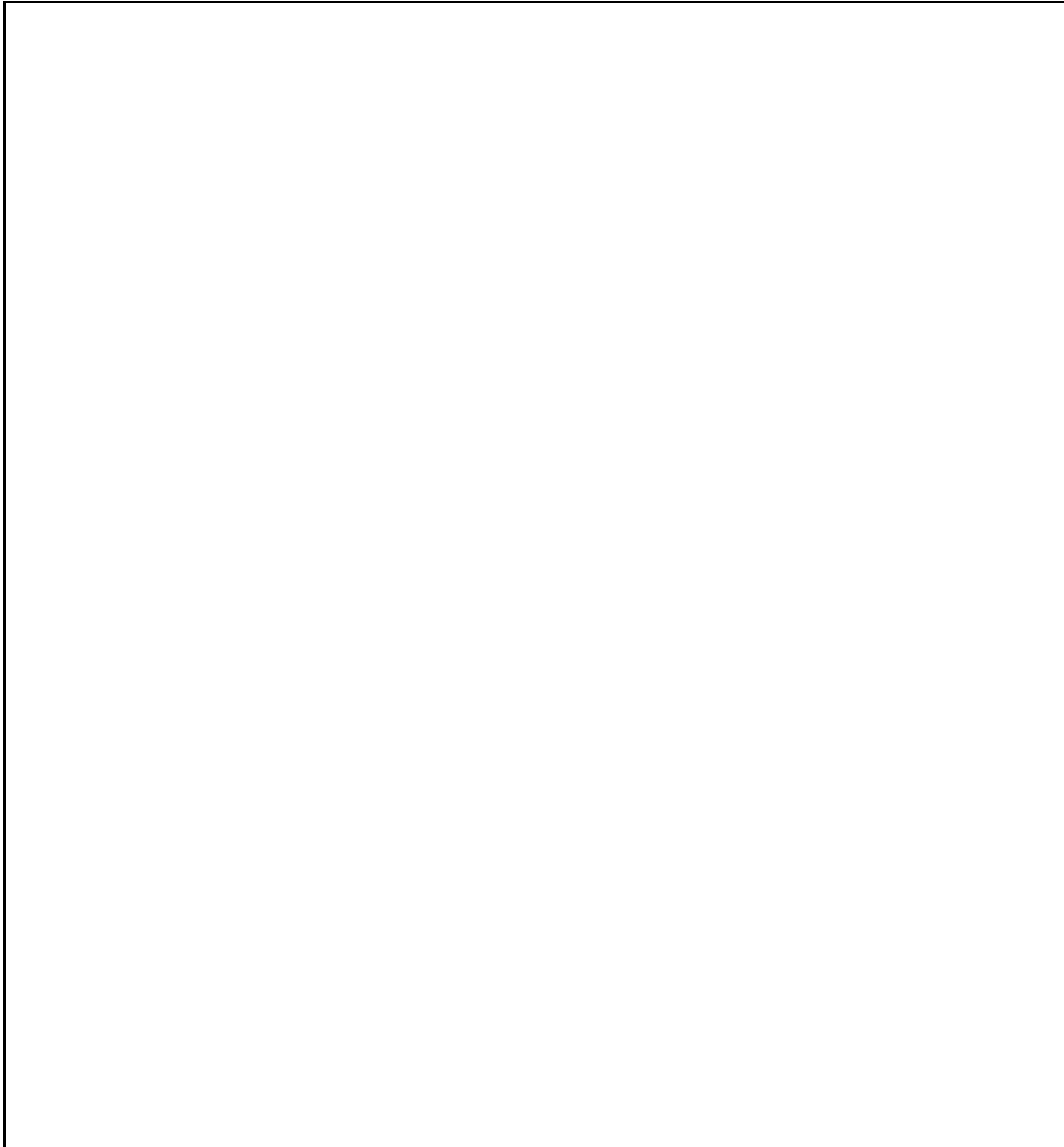




During the activity, think about the following questions:

- When you were in the outer circle, what did you observe your classmates saying and/or doing when they gave a strong answer?
- When you were in the inner circle answering questions, how did it feel? What questions were easier to answer than others?

Write down your thoughts.



Step 3: To close the activity, we'll debrief as a class. Keep your notes above close at hand.

Common interview questions

Helpful hints to use when answering interview questions:

- Use complete sentences and answer the entire question
- Responses should be professional, rather than casual or personal

- To answer questions requiring a situation or example, (1) describe the specific situation you were involved in, (2) explain your actions, and (3) state the outcome/s.
- Try to avoid yes or no responses, filler words (uh, huh, okay, like), and negative comments or descriptions.

Write down your thoughts and practice answering common interview questions.

Tell me about yourself.

Why do you want to...

- work here?
- go to school here?
- get into this program?

What are your greatest strengths?

What are your weaknesses?

What was the last good book you read?

Tell me about a time when...

- you overcame an obstacle.
- resolved a conflict.
- showed leadership.

Why do you think you are a good fit for this position/college/program?

Where do you see yourself in 5/10 years?

What has been your greatest achievement?

How would a previous supervisor or teacher describe you?

What are your professional goals? What are your educational goals?

I see _____ on your resume. Tell me more about that. What were your day to day responsibilities?

I see you don't have much professional work experience on your resume. What skills do you have that will translate well to the work environment?

Give me an example of a time you had to think outside the box.

Give me an example of how you manage competing priorities.

What motivates you?

Who inspires you?

Give me an example of a time you went above and beyond.

Why should I hire you? What makes you better than other candidates?

What is your availability?

Examples of Unusual Interview Questions

Why would companies ask questions like this? What are they looking for in your response?

“If you could throw a parade of any caliber through the office what type of parade would it be?” (Zappos)

“If you were on an island and could only bring 3 things, what would you bring?” (Yahoo)

“If you were a pizza deliveryman how would you benefit from scissors?” (Apple)

“Do you believe in Big Foot?” (Norwegian Cruise Lines)

“What was the last gift you gave someone?” (Gallup)

“You’re a new addition to the crayon box. What color would you be and why?” (Urban Outfitters)

“Are you more of a hunter or a gatherer?” (Dell)

Self-Assessment (5 minutes)

You can use this handout to reflect on the activity/ies and set goals for yourself.

On a scale of 1-5, how prepared do you feel to go to an interview?

(Circle one: 1 = not confident, 5 = ready for the interview right now)

1

2

3

4

5

What do you feel your interviewing strengths are?

What do you want to work on before you are interviewed?

What do you need more practice with?

Who Do You Think You Are? Elevator Pitch

(30 minutes)

An interview is your chance to make a strong first impression. But in order to do that, you have to be prepared. One way to prepare is to write an elevator pitch—or a quick synopsis of your background and experience. In this activity, you'll write an elevator pitch and practice delivering it with a partner.

Step 1: Have your answer to the question “tell me about yourself” close by.

Step 2: Review this list of elevator pitch tips:

- Keep it brief (30-60 seconds). Don't tell your whole life story. Give a short recap of who you are and what you do.
- Be persuasive and positive. Like a strong thesis statement, you want to get the hiring manager's attention. Focus on what you want to do—not what you don't.
- Mention your goals. Get to the point and say what you're looking for.
- Know your audience. Research the industry and company and notice the language they use when they talk about their work, and write your elevator pitch using that language.

Step 3: Watch this [quick video](#) (4mins) on how to write an elevator pitch and review some [written examples](#).

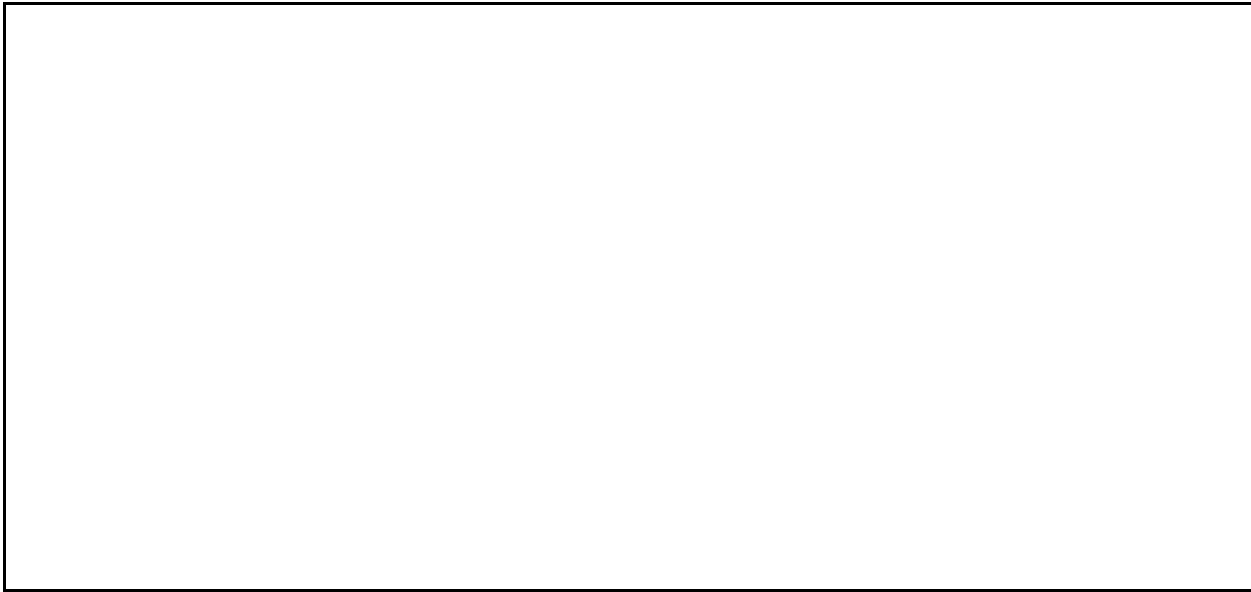
Step 4: Write your own elevator pitch.



Step 5: Get with a partner and practice delivering your elevator pitch to a partner. Keep the following delivery tips in mind:

- Don't speak too fast.
- Avoid filler words "like," "um."
- Deliver your pitch with energy and enthusiasm.
- Avoid a monotone delivery and use expression.
- Make eye contact.

Take notes: What is your partner doing well? How might they improve?



Step 6: Give your partner feedback using the writing and delivery tips above as a guide. Take notes: What did you do well? How might you improve?

