



Supplementary Unit

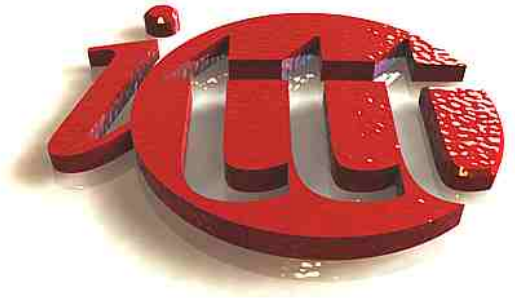
Interview questions



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Supplementary Unit



Questions to ask and expect at a TEFL interview



When at an interview, you will be assessed with regard to your teaching ability, your manner, your appearance, and your ability to communicate in clear, concise English. Interviewers also look at your professional background, your qualifications, your behaviour and your hobbies and interests.

The list below is a guideline of what to expect and what to ask at an interview. It's not a definitive list as different interviewers may have different criteria, but you can expect some of these to be relevant to a teacher's interview

Questions to expect

Various 'ice breaker' questions at the beginning of the interview, topics including:

- Your hobbies and interests.
- Your place of birth.
- The university course you attended. "Why did you decide to...?"
- The weather.
- Do you enjoy the city where you are living?
- Why you chose the particular country/city where you are applying to teach.

The interviewer might then go on to meatier topics such as:

- The TEFL course you attended, why you chose it, if you enjoyed it, the best/worst points of the course.
- Your university degree, why you chose the course, why you are pursuing a TEFL career and not the career direction you could with your degree, etc.
- How long are you intending to stay in the city/country?
- What are your future plans in TEFL?

More specific teaching questions can include more involved concepts, such as:

- A particularly difficult grammatical point (e.g. student A is having difficulty with a point of grammar; how would you teach student A in this circumstance. How would you correct student A in a particular situation?
- In what circumstances would you allow students to resort to their native tongue in class?
- A student is having difficulty with word order. How would you highlight the student's mistake, and how would you correct it?
- A student/students are having difficulty with pronunciation. What procedure would you follow to teach the student/students pronunciation?
- A student is dominating the class. What do you do?



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A favourite of many schools is to ask how you would teach a point of grammar. Sometimes they will ask:

- How would you teach the present perfect and past simple as one lesson?
- How would you teach present continuous and present simple in one lesson? (Ask "what level?")

Above all, expect to give a demonstration lesson, or to prepare a lesson plan.

Most people fail interviews for one or more of the following reasons:

- Not knowing teaching methodology.
- Inability to communicate grammatical points clearly.
- Poor personal appearance.
- Overbearing, over-aggressive, conceited, or know-it-all behaviour.
- Inability to express themselves clearly.
- Lack of confidence.

Questions to ask

Appropriate questions to ask at an interview can include:

- The length of contract, if not already stated.
- Does the school have a resource centre. Ask to look at it.
- Sometimes when you teach 'in company', the client will cancel the lesson. Ask if you are paid for cancelled lessons, or ask if there is a guaranteed minimum income.
- Ask if travel time between lessons is included in the salary.
- Does the school provide a transport pass?
- Do you get holiday pay?
- Do you get sick pay?
- Is there a contract completion bonus?
- Are you refunded for airfare costs from and to your home country? (Note that this is not a common perk.)
- Does the school provide accommodation, if so where is it, and how much?
- Does the school process legal documents?
- Does the school pay for your work permit? If so, does that include associated travelling costs for the visa?
- Does the school provide medical care?

It's a fine line between what you need know and sounding too cash-orientated, so be careful.

The best source of information regarding conditions in a school are current or past teachers, so ask to speak to either or both.



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Questions that have been asked at interviews



Note that the interviewer is more likely to be interested in *how* you answer the questions below rather than wanting to find out if you know the 'correct' answer, if any.

1. What does the expression 'a good lesson' mean to you?
2. Do you have any opinions on the difference between good and bad board work?
3. What's a good warm-up that you use for a pre-intermediate class?
4. How would you do a pair-work exercise if you had eleven students in a class?
5. What would you do if a student asked you an extremely tricky grammar question and you didn't have a clue how to answer it?
6. Why can't we say "the beach was very wonderful"?
7. Which two topics do you find generate no interest whatsoever for a class of foreign students?
8. "A teacher should be an entertainer" Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why?
9. What's the difference between "I'll see you on Sunday" and "I'm going to see you on Sunday"?
10. How would you handle a situation in which a student in an adult class suddenly said "Teacher, this lesson is boring"?
11. How would you explain the difference between 'slender' and 'thin'?
12. What's the difference between a progress test and a diagnostic test?
13. What do you think is the most difficult age group to teach and why?
14. What is a grammar point that you particularly enjoy teaching and why?
15. "I often go to Paris" could mean that you go twice a year, however, you wouldn't use "I often go the dentist" even though you have your teeth checked twice a year. Why is that?
16. What is the ideal group size for a conversation class and why?
17. How long should it take to prepare a two-hour lesson on phrasal verbs?
18. When you address a beginner level class for the very first time, what is it important to keep in mind?
19. Give an example of a sentence in present perfect passive.
20. Which topic/grammar point do you find difficult/tricky to teach and why?
21. What's the difference between teaching a class of adults and a class of young learners?
22. What are your strengths as a teacher?
23. What areas of your teaching do you think need more development?
24. What coursebooks have you used?
Which did you like and why? Which didn't you like and why?
24. Tell us about an instance when a young learner behaved badly in class.
How did you deal with it? What could you have done differently?
25. Talk us through a lesson you taught recently. Why did you do [pick one stage]?
What was the aim of [pick another stage]? How did you present [the language point]? etc.
26. What are the differences between teaching monolingual classes and multilingual classes?
27. Are there any particular things about [Thai/Mexican/Saudi] students you should bear in mind which might not be so relevant for European students?
28. How would you teach a lesson to contrast the present simple with the present continuous?

