



## Lesson Guide

Climbers learn how to prepare for interviews by focusing on verbal and non-verbal communication techniques, tailoring answers to specific roles, and practicing key interview strategies. By the end of the lesson, they have researched a company, prepared structured answers using the STAR method, and participated in a mock interview with peer feedback.

<b>Learning Objectives</b>	<p><b>Improve</b> verbal communication techniques for clarity, tone, pacing, and volume.</p> <p><b>Develop</b> strategies to excel in various interview formats and engage well.</p> <p><b>Understand</b> how body language and attire affect interview success.</p> <p><b>Prepare</b> for interviews by researching, practicing, and anticipating questions.</p>
<b>WIOA Program Elements</b>	<p><b>E5. Education Offered Concurrently with Workforce Preparation.</b> Combines workforce preparation, basic academic skills, and occupational skills.</p>
<b>Key Concepts</b>	<p><b>Verbal Communication:</b> Techniques for speaking clearly, confidently, and professionally during an interview.</p> <p><b>Non-Verbal Communication:</b> The use of body language, eye contact, and attire to convey confidence and professionalism.</p>
<b>Materials</b>	<p>Coach Deck: <a href="#">Interview IQ</a></p> <p>Internet-ready devices with Hats &amp; Ladders access</p> <p><b>Activity:</b> <a href="#">Mock Interview Practice</a></p> <p><b>Rubric:</b> <a href="#">Mock Interview Practice</a></p> <p><b>Extension Activity:</b> <a href="#">Write a Thank You Note to Your Interviewer</a></p> <p><b>Rubric:</b> <a href="#">Write a Thank You Note to Your Interviewer</a></p>

## Coach Prep

1. Review lesson instructions and activity materials, including the **Coach Deck**, an optional resource you can use to guide Climbers through the lesson and digital Career Climb.
2. Arrange a computer lab or laptop cart, or instruct your group to bring their own devices with internet connectivity.
3. *Optional:* From the Coach platform, assign the **Interview IQ** Career Climb to your group. This will allow you to track their progress from your dashboard.

## Warm-Up

1. To introduce the concept of interviews, have Climbers think about a time when they had to explain something important to someone else.
2. Suggested prompts:
  - **What was the situation?** *Perhaps it was explaining game rules to your friends, helping a younger sibling with homework, or talking to a coach about your performance in a sport.*
  - **How did you make sure the other person understood you?** *Did you break the explanation into smaller steps? Use examples or comparisons to make it relatable? Maybe you asked questions to check if they were following along?*
  - **What challenges did you face?** *Did they seem distracted or uninterested? Was it hard to explain something you knew well in a way they could understand?*
3. Have a few Climbers share their thoughts.
4. Explain that interviews are similar to these situations but with different stakes. They require clear communication, preparation, and the ability to present oneself confidently.
5. Briefly outline what will be covered in the lesson, including:
  - **How to communicate clearly and confidently.**
  - **The importance of body language and attire.**
  - **Strategies for different interview formats.**
  - **How to prepare and practice for interviews.**

## Guide a Career Climb

1. Introduce the concept of interview preparation. Highlight that everyone has different experiences and comfort levels with interviews. Suggested prompts:

- *What are your biggest concerns about interviewing?*
- *What do you think is the most important part of interview preparation?*
- 2. Explain that developing specific interview skills will support them in navigating interviews with confidence.
- 3. Direct Climbers to the Hats & Ladders platform to complete the **Interview IQ** Career Climb, which consists of four Ladders:
  - **All About Interviews** (6 mins.)
  - **Winning Words to Make You Shine** (6 mins.)
  - **Actions Speak!** (5 mins.)
  - **Interview Prep Playbook** (8 mins.)
- 4. Climbers can complete the entire Career Climb **at once**, or they can **pause** to share out takeaways and questions along the way.
- 5. Climbers can then apply what they learned to kickstart their own job hunt journeys by completing the activity.

### Activity: Mock Interview Practice

1. Have Climbers independently read through the instructions on the [activity handout](#).
2. Climbers complete the activity.
3. Facilitate a brief **pair-and-share reflection**. Suggested prompts:
  - a. *What was the most challenging part of the mock interview?*
  - b. *How did practicing help you feel more prepared?*
  - c. *What feedback did you receive, and how will you apply it?*
4. Have a few Climbers share their reflections.

### (Optional) Extension Activity: Write a Thank You Note to Your Interviewer

1. Explain to Climbers that sending a thank you note after an interview is a professional way to express appreciation, reinforce their interest in the role, and leave a positive impression on the interviewer.
2. Walk Climbers through the key components of an effective post-interview thank you note:
  - A **greeting** addressing the interviewer by name.
  - A **thank you statement** expressing appreciation for the interview opportunity.
  - A **personalized detail** referencing something specific from the conversation.
  - A **reaffirmation** of enthusiasm for the role and company.
  - A **closing statement** that keeps the door open for future communication.

3. Have Climbers independently read through the instructions on the [Activity Handout](#) and draft a thank you note based on their mock interview experience. They should reflect on what they appreciated about the interview, what they learned, and how they can express their continued interest.
4. Peer Review & Reflection. Climbers exchange notes with a partner for feedback.  
Suggested reflection prompts:
  - What details made this note feel genuine and personal?
  - Does the note express gratitude and enthusiasm clearly?
  - Is the tone professional and polite?
5. Have a few Climbers share their notes or key takeaways.
6. Emphasize that a well-written thank you note can make a strong final impression on an employer and demonstrate professionalism. Encourage Climbers to make thank you notes a habit after real interviews.

## Wrap-Up

1. Emphasize that interviews are a crucial step in the job hunt journey and that preparation and practice are key to success. Suggested prompt:
  - a. *Each interview, regardless of the outcome, is an opportunity to showcase your skills, learn more about the company, and move closer to your career goals.*
2. Review key lesson concepts, including:
  - a. **Interview Preparation:** Researching the company, practice questions, and plan your presentation.
  - b. **Verbal Communication:** Speaking clearly, confidently, and professionally.
  - c. **Non-Verbal Communication:** Using body language and attire to convey confidence.

## Assessment

- To evaluate the **Climbers' understanding** of the lesson, use the provided [rubric](#) to score activity submissions on a scale of 1 to 4 for each criterion.

## Modifications

- If you do not have access to devices, have Climbers complete the digital Career Climb at home

## Activity: Mock Interview Practice

**Step 1:** Research the Company

1. Choose a company from the job postings you saved in the Job Hunt Journey lesson – or, pick another company that interests you!

**Company Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

2. Use the company’s website or social media presence to learn about their mission, values, and current projects or initiatives.
  - a. Look for information about what they prioritize (e.g., innovation, teamwork, customer service).
3. Take some notes on how your skills and experiences align with their goals:

**Step 2:** Prepare Answers

1. Recall these common interview questions, then start thinking about how you might answer them:
  - a. "Tell me about yourself."
  - b. "Why are you interested in this role?"
  - c. "Describe a time you overcame a challenge."
2. Using the STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result) to structure your responses, draft clear and concise answers for each question.
  - a. Highlight specific skills and experiences that relate to the role.
  - b. Practice saying your answers out loud to build confidence.

"Tell me about yourself." <b>S:</b> <b>T:</b> <b>A:</b> <b>R:</b>	"Describe a time you overcame a challenge." <b>S:</b> <b>T:</b> <b>A:</b> <b>R:</b>
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"Why are you interested in this role?"

S:

T:

A:

R:

**Step 3:** Practice the Interview

1. Partner up with someone. One person will act as the interviewer, and the other will be the candidate.
2. The interviewer will ask the prepared questions, and the candidate will respond as if they are in a real interview.
  - a. Remember to use professional language and maintain good posture.
  - b. Make eye contact, smile, and speak clearly.

**Step 4:** Provide Feedback

1. After the mock interview, discuss how it went.
2. The interviewer should give feedback on three areas:
  - a. **Verbal Communication:** Was the candidate clear and concise? Did they stay on topic?
  - b. **Body Language:** Did the candidate appear confident? Were they engaging?
  - c. **Overall Presentation:** Did the candidate effectively showcase their skills and experiences?
3. Switch roles and repeat the process so both partners get a chance to practice.
  - a. **★ Pro Tip:** Use a timer to keep the interview realistic and focused. Aim to keep responses under 2 minutes each.

**Step 5:** Submit Feedback

Who did you interview? \_\_\_\_\_

On a scale of 1-5, how clear and concise were the interviewee's responses? \_\_\_\_\_

*With 1 being not clear, and 5 being very clear.*

On a scale of 1-5, how confident did the interviewee appear? \_\_\_\_\_

*With 1 being not confident, and 5 being very confident.*

On a scale of 1-5, how effectively did the interviewee showcase their skills? \_\_\_\_\_

*With 1 being not effective, and 5 being very effective.*

## Rubric: Mock Interview Practice

Criteria	1: Needs Improvement	2: Developing	3: Proficient	4: Exemplary
<b>Company Research</b>	Did not research the company.	Researched the company but missed key values or culture.	Identified the company's core values and described the culture accurately.	Thoroughly researched the company, including social media presence, and provided a detailed description of the culture.
<b>Answer Preparation</b>	Did not prepare any answers.	Prepared some answers but missed key skills or experiences.	Prepared most answers and included relevant skills and experiences.	Comprehensively prepared all answers with clear examples and alignment with company values.
<b>Verbal Communication</b>	Did not communicate clearly or confidently.	Communicated somewhat clearly but lacked confidence or clarity.	Communicated clearly and confidently, with good tone and pacing.	Communicated exceptionally clearly and confidently, with excellent tone, pacing, and volume.
<b>Non-Verbal Communication</b>	Did not use body language or attire effectively.	Used some body language but lacked confidence or professionalism.	Used body language and attire effectively to convey confidence.	Used body language and attire exceptionally well, demonstrating high confidence and professionalism.

## Extension Activity: Write a Thank You Note to Your Interviewer

Practice professional communication by crafting a thoughtful thank-you note to your interviewer, reinforcing key takeaways from your mock interview experience.

 **Step 1: Reflect on Your Interview Experience**

Fill in the table below based on your mock interview experience.

<p>Think about your mock interview. What went well? What feedback did you receive?</p>	
<p>Consider what you learned about the company and how your skills align with their values.</p>	
<p>Identify a key moment from the interview that stood out—maybe a question you answered well or a helpful piece of feedback.</p>	

 **Step 2: Draft Your Thank-You Note**

Use the template below to structure your note. Be sure to include the key components of an effective post-interview thank-you note.

- A **greeting** addressing the interviewer by name.
- A **thank you statement** expressing appreciation for the interview opportunity.
- A **personalized detail** referencing something specific from the conversation.
- A **reaffirmation** of enthusiasm for the role and company.
- A **closing statement** that keeps the door open for future communication.



**Template**

Dear [Interviewer's Name],

Thank you for taking the time to interview me for the [position name] role. I appreciate the opportunity to learn more about [company name] and discuss how my skills align with your team's needs.

I especially enjoyed our conversation about [specific topic], and I found your insights on [something they shared] really valuable. The experience reinforced my enthusiasm for [industry/career path] and my excitement about the possibility of contributing to [company name].

I look forward to the opportunity to apply what I've learned and continue improving my interview skills. Thank you again for your time and feedback!

Best,  
[Your Name]

**Draft**

 **Step 3: Revise and Polish**

- Check for professionalism: Is your tone polite and appreciative?
- Proofread: Are there any spelling or grammar mistakes?
- Make it personal: Did you include a specific detail from your interview?

**Final thank you note:**

 **Step 4: Submit Your Final Note**

- Have a peer review your note and provide feedback.
- Submit your final draft to your coach for review.

## Rubric: Write a Thank You Note to Your Interviewer

Criteria	1: Needs Improvement	2: Developing	3: Proficient	4: Exemplary
<b>Professionalism</b>	Tone is too informal or lacks gratitude.	Tone is somewhat professional but could be more polished.	Tone is professional, polite, and appreciative.	Tone is highly professional, engaging, and sincerely appreciative.
<b>Personalization</b>	No reference to specific interview moments.	Includes some personalization but lacks depth.	References a specific moment or insight from the interview.	Thoughtfully reflects on key takeaways and personalizes the note well.
<b>Clarity &amp; Structure</b>	Poorly structured or unclear.	Somewhat structured but may be hard to follow.	Clear and logically structured.	Well-structured, concise, and engaging.
<b>Grammar &amp; Mechanics</b>	Many errors in grammar, spelling, or punctuation.	A few minor errors.	Well-proofread with minimal errors.	Flawless grammar, spelling, and punctuation.