

Preparing for an Interview

Warm-Up

WHAT'S A RETAIL JOB?

The word **retail** means *the sale of goods*. There are many different types of retail positions, such as *cashier, sales clerk, and stocker*. Name some retailers in your area. Look at some job ads from a local newspaper or mobile app. Are these retailers hiring?



Interview Questions

Here are some common questions you will hear at a job interview. Listen to the questions and repeat them.

- Where did you work in your country?
- How long did you work there?
- What are your **strengths**?
- What is one **weakness** you have?
- What **skills** do you have for retail work?
- Do you have **experience** handling cash?
- When can you start?
- What is your **availability**?

Strength Vs. Skill

A. Introduction

An interviewer will probably ask you about your strengths and skills.

Strength

A strength is a quality you have by nature. You can use *adjectives* or *nouns* to describe your strengths:

- I am *hardworking*.
- I am *friendly*.
- I am *punctual*. (I always arrive on time.)
- I am a *team player*.

Skill

A skill is something you learned through experience or education.

- I have good *product knowledge*.
- I've used many *POS systems*. (POS = point of sale)
- I have a lot of *customer service* experience.
- I have *marketing* skills.

B. Practice

Are the following strengths or skills? Put a ✓ in the correct box.

#	I am ...	Strength	Skill
1	hardworking		
2	good at computer programming		
3	detail-oriented		
4	experienced at handling cash		
5	bilingual (can speak two languages)		

Preparing for an Interview

Here are some words and expressions to learn before your job interview.

Question topic	What to talk about	Answers
Strengths	good qualities you have	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am hardworking. • I am trustworthy. • I am approachable. (People come to me for help.) • I am good with numbers. • I have a good memory.
A Weakness	a quality you need to improve (don't choose something really bad)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am a bit sensitive. (I can get hurt feelings.) • I am a bit chatty at times. (I sometimes talk a lot.) • I am a people-pleaser. (I try too hard to make people happy.)
Experience	work you did in the past (talk about the <i>amount</i> and <i>type</i> of work)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have <i>six</i> months' experience working <i>as a clerk</i>. • I have <i>four</i> years' experience working <i>in a pharmacy</i>.
Availability	when you can start and how often you can work (say if you can work <i>full-time</i> or <i>part-time</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can start anytime. • I can start in two weeks. • I can work weekdays. • I can work weekday evenings. • I can work from 9 to 5. • I can only work weekends. • I can only work part-time. • I can work full-time.
Skills	things you learned through experience or education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I understand POS (point of sale) systems. • I have a lot of product knowledge. • I know a lot about customer service.

More Words I Can Use:

Listening

A. An Interview Excerpt

Listen to part of an interview and fill in the blanks.

A: What word best describes you as a worker?

B: approachable. People come to me for help.

A: What is one weakness you have?

B: I am a bit chatty. I like to talk, but I always get my work done.

A: What kind of retail experience do you have?

B: I worked at a grocery store for two years. It was a part-time job.

A: What's your availability?

B: I'm pretty flexible, but I can't work on Sundays.

A: When can you start?

B: I can start in two weeks. I have to give my employer two weeks' notice.

B. Comprehension

Listen to the interview again. Write or say the answers.

1. What strength does the applicant have?
2. What weakness does the applicant have?
3. Does the applicant have any retail experience?
4. Describe the applicant's availability.
5. Why can't the applicant start this week?

Interview Tips

A. Tips

Read the tips.

Place a star (★) beside the ones you need to practice.

- _____ 1. Prepare your answers.
- _____ 2. Rehearse your answers.
- _____ 3. Dress in formal wear.
- _____ 4. Be on time.
- _____ 5. Introduce yourself.
- _____ 6. Shake hands and smile.
- _____ 7. Answer the questions.
- _____ 8. Talk about your strengths.
- _____ 9. Ask a question or two.
- _____ 10. Say thank you.

B. My Questions

Write three more questions *you* can ask an interviewer.

Do not ask about salary.

Ex. *What do you like about working here?*

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

Role-Play

A. Beginning an Interview

Practice walking into a room and meeting an interviewer.
Take turns with a partner. Smile and shake each other's hands. Take a seat.

Interviewer:

- Hello. You must be _____. I'm _____. [*extends hand*]
- Nice to meet you.
- Hi, _____. Thanks for coming.
- Please have a seat.

Interviewee:

- Hello. I'm _____. [*extends or shakes hand*]
- It's nice to meet you too.
- Thanks for having me.
- Thank you.

B. Closing an Interview

Practice the end of an interview. Take turns with a partner.
Shake each other's hands before you walk out the door.

Interviewer:

- Do you have any questions for me?
- Thank you for coming in.
- We will be in touch.
- Have a nice day.

Interviewee:

- Do you do price matching?
- It was nice to meet you.
- I look forward to hearing from you.
- You too.

Matching

Match up the questions and answers.

- | | |
|---|---|
| _____ 1. Hello. You must be Kenny. I'm Chad. | a) I'm a people-pleaser. I'm not good at saying <i>no</i> . |
| _____ 2. Tell me about one weakness you have. | b) Hello. Nice to meet you. |
| _____ 3. When are you available? | c) I can work two evenings a week plus weekends. |
| _____ 4. Do you have any retail experience? | d) I am hoping for full-time, but I will take part-time. |
| _____ 5. What retail skills do you have? | e) Yes, I worked in a clothing store in India. |
| _____ 6. Are you looking for full-time or part-time work? | f) I have product knowledge. |

Review

Task 1

SENTENCE BUILDING

Complete the interview by filling in the blanks with appropriate words and phrases or questions. Practice your dialogue with a partner.

Interviewer: Hello. You must be _____ . I'm Jane.

Applicant: Hi, Jane. It's nice to meet you.

Interviewer: How long have you lived here?

Applicant: I've lived here for _____ .

Interviewer: Do you have a job right now?

Applicant: No, I don't.

Interviewer: Tell me about your work experience. Did you work in retail in your country?

Applicant: _____

Interviewer: What are your strengths?

Applicant: _____

Interviewer: Tell me about one weakness you have.

Applicant: _____

Interviewer: What is your availability?

Applicant: I can work _____ .

Interviewer: Do you have any questions for me?

Applicant: How long has this store been in the mall?

Interviewer: Good question. We have been here for three years.

Applicant: Okay. Is it _____ on Sundays?

Interviewer: Yes. We are open from 12 to 5 on Sundays.

Applicant: Okay. I _____ work on Sundays.



Review cont.

Task 1 cont.

Interviewer: Good to know. Thank you for coming in, _____ .

Applicant: Thank you, Jane. It was nice to meet you.

Interviewer: We will be in touch next week.

Applicant: I look _____ to hearing from you.

Interviewer: Have a _____ day.

Applicant: You too.

Task 2

SEQUENCING

The following interview is out of order.

Place the conversation in the correct order from 1 to 11.

- _____ 3 Do you have a job right now, Monique?
- _____ It's nice to meet you, Wanda. [*shakes hands*]
- _____ No, I don't. I just moved here from France.
- _____ That is all good to know. I am looking for someone like you.
- _____ Yes, I worked full-time in a sporting goods store.
- _____ I learned how to handle money. I also learned product knowledge about sports equipment and clothing.
- _____ I am punctual and detail-oriented.
I am also patient and hardworking.
- _____ What retail skills did you learn at the sporting goods store?
- _____ I am glad you mentioned product knowledge.
What personal strengths do you have?
- _____ Did you work in retail in France?
- _____ Hi. You must be Monique. I'm Wanda. Please take a seat.

Task 3

WRITING

A. Questions

In your notebook, write two questions you can ask an interviewer.

B. Tips

In your notebook, write three tips about using body language in an interview.



Learner Reflection

PREPARING FOR AN INTERVIEW

Add check marks (✓) to show what you've learned in this lesson.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Can I...	Yes (very well) 	Yes (with help) 	Not yet 
greet an interviewer?			
respond to common interview questions?			
describe my strengths?			
describe a weakness I have?			
ask an interviewer a few questions?			
close an interview politely?			

My Notes

Answer Key

LESSON DESCRIPTION:

In this lesson, students are introduced to language and useful expressions for a retail job. They practice common questions and appropriate answers. They also learn the difference between a strength and a skill.

LEVEL: Low Int

TIME: 1 hour

TAGS: functional English, useful expressions, interviews, retail, interviewing, answering questions, skills, strengths, assessment tasks

Warm-Up

Review the definition of *retail* with your students. You may want to explain that many people begin with retail jobs because they don't require a lot of experience. Bring in some classified ads or find an employment app that covers your area. Put students in small groups to search for retail places that are hiring. Share the results.

Interview Questions

Play the audio or read the questions out loud.
Have students repeat with the proper intonation.

Strength Vs. Skill

A. INTRODUCTION

Review the differences between strengths (nature) and skills (learned).

B. PRACTICE

- | | | |
|-------------|-------------|----------|
| 1. strength | 3. strength | 5. skill |
| 2. skill | 4. skill | |

Preparing for an Interview

Go over the useful words and phrases that students can use in an interview. Encourage students to add some other strengths and skills in the blank box. (E.g., patient, outgoing, trustworthy...)

Listening

A. AN INTERVIEW EXCERPT

- A: What word best describes you as a worker?
B: **Approachable**. People come to me for help.
A: What is one **weakness** you have?
B: I am a bit **chatty**. I like to talk, but I always get my work done.
A: What kind of retail **experience** do you have?
B: I worked at a grocery store for two years.
It was a **part-time** job.
A: What's your **availability**?
B: I'm pretty **flexible**, but I can't work on Sundays.
A: When can you start?
B: I can start in two weeks.
I have to give my employer two weeks' **notice**.

B. COMPREHENSION

1. She is approachable. People come to her for help.
2. She is chatty, but not when it's busy.
3. Yes, she worked at a grocery store for two years.
4. She is flexible, but she can't work on Sundays.
5. She can't start this week because she has to give her current employer two weeks' notice.

(continued on the next page...)

Answer Key cont.

Interview Tips

A. TIPS

Have your students read the tips silently to themselves. Then ask them to identify areas they need to work on. Focus on these when you do assessment or review work.

B. MY QUESTIONS

Help your students prepare some questions to ask at this point in an interview. Explain that this is not the time to ask about salary. They can ask about the company, the staff, and any future plans.

Role-Play

Put students in pairs and have them practice beginning and closing an interview. Explain to them that these are important parts of an interview. They want to leave a good first and last impression. Invite pairs to come up to the front and practice in front of the class.

Matching

1. b 2. a 3. c 4. e 5. f 6. d

Review (Assessment Tasks)

The following tasks can be used for assessment purposes and/or review practice. You may want to choose one competency to focus on for each task.

TASK 1

Remind students to use complete sentences when they answer or write the question or response. (Answers will vary.) Give students time to practice their sentences out loud in pairs.

TASK 2

Give your students some time to place the conversation in the correct order. When students have finished, they can get together

with a partner to read out the conversation to see if it makes sense. Then have two students read the correct sequence for the class.

- 3 Do you have a job right now, Monique?
- 2 It's nice to meet you, Wanda. [*shakes hands*]
- 4 No, I don't. I just moved here from France.
- 11 That is all good to know. I am looking for someone like you.
- 6 Yes, I worked full-time in a sporting goods store.
- 8 I learned how to handle money. I also learned product knowledge about sports equipment and clothing.
- 10 I am punctual and detail-oriented.
I am also patient and hardworking.
- 7 What retail skills did you learn at the sporting goods store?
- 9 I am glad you mentioned product knowledge.
What personal strengths do you have?
- 5 Did you work in retail in France?
- 1 Hi. You must be Monique. I'm Wanda. Please take a seat.

You could ask more advanced learners to complete the interview.

TASK 3

Ask students to complete and submit the writing tasks based on what they practiced on page 5.

Learner Reflection

When you are finished with this lesson, have your students reflect on their learning by filling in the chart.

SPELLING NOTE:

This lesson shows the American spelling of the word *Practice*. Other English-speaking countries spell it this way: *Practise* (when used as a verb; *Practice* when used as a noun). Make it a challenge for your students to find this word in the lesson and see if they know the alternate spelling.

ABOUT THE EMOJI:

The emoji (and their derivatives) used in this lesson are from Twemoji, an open-source project by Twitter. They are licensed under CC-BY 4.0. <https://github.com/twitter/twemoji>