


Language for ...

job interviews

Age: Young adult / Adult 

Level: Intermediate – Advanced

Length: 90 minutes (approx.)

Language Focus: key expressions for candidates in a job interview; vocabulary to describe personality and skills

Skills: speaking, listening, reading

Materials: one copy of the worksheet per student; a PC/projector with an internet connection in the classroom (the lesson includes an online video); one Job interview role card per student (see Task 4); for lower-level groups, one copy per student of the Video transcript

Aims: to allow students to effectively understand and use common expressions for describing their personality and skills, to equip students with language to participate as candidate in a job interview

What are red words?

Ninety per cent of the time, speakers of English use just 7,500 words in speech and writing. These words appear in the Macmillan Dictionary in red and are graded with stars. One-star words are frequent, two-star words are more frequent and three-star words are the most frequent. 'Language for' lessons are based on red words and encourage students to improve their English through communicative tasks using collocation and commonly used phrases.

<https://www.macmillandictionary.com/learn/red-words.html>

- 1 Begin the lesson by asking the class if any student has ever done a job interview in English (or if anybody has recently done a job interview in *any* language). From those students who have, select one and ask him/her to speak a little about how the interview went. Encourage other students

to ask questions to the selected student. If any useful "interview" vocabulary comes up, make a note of it on the board. Finally, tell students that today's lesson will focus on useful language to do a job interview in English.

- 2 Hand out the student worksheets and ask students to work in pairs for Task 1a. Tell students that the first pair to find all 10 adjectives is the winner. Monitor the class as they search for the words, helping weaker pairs. Once one pair has finished, check that their answers are correct before announcing them as winners! Then ask the winners to call out the 10 adjectives. Give feedback on the pronunciation of each adjective and elicit definitions for some of the more difficult adjectives (e.g. *easygoing*, *tolerant*).
- 3 Refer students to Task 1b and read the instructions aloud. Again, students work in pairs to complete the task. Finally, elicit the correct answers.
- 4 On the board, write the words 'personality' and 'skills.' Explain that in a job interview, it is common to be asked about both these items. Try to elicit the difference between the two. For example, a nurse: *personality* = sociable, sympathetic; *skills* = ability to work under pressure, good time management. Highlight that personality relates to character, while skills relate to behaviour and knowledge. (It is important to establish this distinction now because the video in Task 2 refers to it.) Next, allow students time to read the instructions for Task 1c and give them a few minutes to talk in pairs and discuss the questions. Monitor as they speak, taking note of interview-related language which they may use. Finally, provide feedback on this language.

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- 5 If appropriate, ask the class if any student has ever worked in London. If so, ask this person to speak a little about their experience there. Tell students they are going to watch a video filmed in London and give students a moment to read through the task. For Task 2a, download and play the video once. Allow students a moment to decide their answers individually and then ask them to compare in pairs. Finally, elicit the correct answers.
- 6 Students read the instructions for Task 2b. Again, give students a moment to read through the task. Play the video a second time. Allow students a moment to decide their answers individually and then ask them to compare in pairs. Finally, elicit the correct answers. Explain that Task 2c is a question of personal opinion. Ask students to share their answers and why they have chosen that person.
- 7 Refer students to Task 2d. Ask them to talk in pairs to decide the meaning of each of the four expressions. If students find this difficult, you may wish to play the video again to provide more context. Alternatively, for lower-level groups, you may wish to hand out a copy of the video transcript, asking students to find the four expressions and read the context around each. Finally, elicit the correct definition for each expression. Ask questions to ensure correct understanding (e.g. *Leo, can you give me an example of a time when you needed to think on your feet?*).
- 8 Give students time to read the instructions for Task 2e. Encourage students to first read the entire paragraph before inserting any words. Then ask students to work individually to complete the task. Monitor weaker students during this challenging task. After 2-3 minutes, ask students to compare their answers in pairs. Finally, elicit the correct answers.
- 9 For Task 3a, ask students to work in pairs to complete the missing words, emphasising that they have already seen all the necessary words earlier in this lesson. As they do the task, monitor the class and perhaps give some hints. Finally, elicit the correct answers.
- 10 Refer students to Task 3b. Perhaps correct the first item together as a class. Then ask students to work in pairs to complete the remaining sentences. If students are finding this task difficult, reveal which exact words need to be corrected. Finally, elicit the correct answers.
- 11 Students sit in new pairs. Read aloud the instructions for Task 4. Then hand out a role card to each student. First, allow students a moment to complete Step 1: if the student works in a particular sector, he/she should choose a job related to that sector. If the student is unemployed or in full-time education, he/she should choose a job which seems somehow relevant. Once this step has been completed, tell students that they have a certain time limit for each interview (e.g. 5-6 minutes). Allow Student A to begin to interview Student B, encouraging the interviewer to include follow-up questions. Monitor and take notes. When the time is up, the students should swap roles. In the end, elicit any interesting information which you may have overheard during the interviews (e.g. *Maria, it sounds like you have a lot of experience in an international environment. Can you tell us about that?*). Finally, provide feedback on both good language and errors which came up during the interviews.

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12 Students remain in the same pairs. Refer them to Task 5. Give students a few minutes to discuss the questions, encouraging them to incorporate new language from this lesson. To wrap up the activity, ask students to share their interview tips (as per the final question). Finally, provide feedback on this entire task.

KEY:

1a

t	h	f	r	l	r	h	h	r	h	x	p
o	f	a	o	l	t	k	f	w	u	o	l
l	e	c	r	g	a	v	s	q	b	t	e
e	n	h	g	d	n	c	s	a	b	n	a
r	e	e	a	t	w	e	u	w	x	f	s
a	r	e	n	z	c	o	r	u	g	p	a
n	g	r	i	k	s	m	r	v	d	r	n
t	e	f	s	u	f	l	q	k	o	r	t
t	t	u	e	c	a	l	m	e	i	u	m
z	i	l	d	i	l	l	f	d	d	n	s
l	c	a	e	a	s	y	g	o	i	n	g
f	x	a	p	a	t	i	e	n	t	w	p

tolerant, cheerful
pleasant, patient
organised, calm
nervous, hard-working
energetic, easygoing

- b**
1. for
 2. in
 3. for
 4. as
 5. in

- 2a**
1. education
 2. ready
 3. present
 4. head

- b**
1. tolerant
 2. cheerful, pleasant
 3. organised
 4. organised, calm

c The answer here could be either Rachel or Shazra – both have never had a bad interview (although Rachel admits that she has felt nervous).

- d**
1. 'in the industry' = in this type of job; in this sector
 2. 'people skills' = the ability to communicate effectively with people in a friendly way, especially in business
 3. 'to think on your feet' = to have good ideas and make decisions quickly in a difficult situation
 4. 'damage limitation' = the process of trying to limit the negative effects of something (e.g. the negative effects of a mistake or an accident)

- e**
1. strength
 2. multitasking
 3. deadlines
 4. decision-making
 5. communication
 6. cultural awareness

- 3a**
1. people/communication
 2. industry/sector
 3. feet
 4. head
 5. deadlines

- b**
1. I have a Master's **in** Biochemistry.
 2. Irina works as **a** doctor.
 3. Jeff works **in** Education. He's a teacher.
 4. My main **strength** is my people skills.
 5. I have a lot of experience in giving presentations, so I'd **bring** that skill to this new role.

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Interviewer: Welcome to Live from London. Today we're in King's Cross talking to people about applying for jobs.

Interviewer: What do you do?

Phillip: Work in construction. I'm a project manager.

Interviewer: And what skills do you need for that job?

Phillip: To be a project manager you do need quite a bit of experience in the industry, and, these days, a good university education, I suppose.

Interviewer: And what kind of personality do you need?

Phillip: A tolerant one.

Interviewer: What do you do?

Rachel: At the moment I'm working in a café.

Interviewer: What skills do you need for that job?

Rachel: Barista training, people skills, and just generally, yeah, being cheerful and ready to serve customers.

Interviewer: What kind of personality do you need?

Rachel: A pleasant personality, and full of patience.

Interviewer: What do you do?

Shazra: I'm a bid project manager. That means I work for a train company where we try to buy and re-lease trains.

Lynne: I work for the same train company, and I work as an administrator, and I look at having, sending people off travelling. Doing all that sort of administration.

Interviewer: What skills do you need for that job?

Shazra: For my job you need to be really organised. You need to think on your feet. You need to be able to write well, present well and things like that.

Lynne: Organisational skills again. Clear head, calm, thinking on your feet, also. Most of the time I'm, I'm thinking on my feet. And good at damage limitation.

Interviewer: Have you ever had a bad interview, and why do you think it was bad? What happened?

Phillip: I've had some bad interviews and invariably it's where I haven't been comfortable in the interview rather than the interview itself.

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Rachel: I've never really had a bad interview. I've had ones where I've been, like, a little bit nervous, but other than that, no.

Lynne: Yeah, I have had a couple of bad interviews, but I've put them to the side. So, to be honest it's so long ago that I really can't remember what went wrong with them. They just didn't like me!

Interviewer: How about you, Shazra?

Shazra: I've had ... I've only had a few interviews and I haven't had very many bad ones. I don't think I've ever had a bad one to be honest. I've had bad jobs, yeah, but not bad interviews, no.

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STUDENT A	STUDENT B
<p>Step 1: Allow your classmate to decide what type of job the interview is for (e.g. accountant, waiter, chemist, etc.)</p> <p>Type of job = _____</p>	<p>Step 1: Allow your classmate to decide what type of job the interview is for (e.g. accountant, waiter, chemist, etc.)</p> <p>Type of job = _____</p>
<p>Step 2: Ask your classmate some of the questions below. If you want, ask other questions which are relevant.</p> <p>What interests you about this role?</p> <p>Why do you think you're the right person for this role?</p> <p>Despite an aspect of your personality which you are trying to improve.</p> <p>What skills would you bring to the role?</p> <p>Can you describe a time when you needed to meet a difficult deadline?</p> <p>Tell me about your education.</p> <p>Can you describe a time when you felt frustrated?</p> <p>Do you have any questions for me about this role?</p>	<p>Step 2: Ask your classmate some of the questions below. If you want, ask other questions which are relevant.</p> <p>Why have you decided to apply for this job?</p> <p>Tell me about your previous role.</p> <p>In your opinion, what are the most important skills for this role?</p> <p>What are your greatest strengths?</p> <p>Can you describe a time when you needed to think on your feet?</p> <p>Would you say you have good people skills? Explain.</p> <p>How would you feel about working in an international environment?</p> <p>Do you have any questions for me about this role?</p>

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1 Warmer

a. Work in pairs. Find ten adjectives of personality in the wordsearch. Complete the table with the words that you find.

t	h	f	r	l	r	h	h	r	h	x	p
o	f	a	o	l	t	k	f	w	u	o	l
l	e	c	r	g	a	v	s	q	b	t	e
e	n	h	g	d	n	c	s	a	b	n	a
r	e	e	a	t	w	e	u	w	x	f	s
a	r	e	n	z	c	o	r	u	g	p	a
n	g	r	i	k	s	m	r	v	d	r	n
t	e	f	s	u	f	l	q	k	o	r	t
t	t	u	e	c	a	l	m	e	i	u	m
z	i	l	d	i	l	l	f	d	d	n	s
l	c	a	e	a	s	y	g	o	i	n	g
f	x	a	p	a	t	i	e	n	t	w	p

Adjectives	
1. _____	6. _____
2. _____	7. _____
3. _____	8. _____
4. _____	9. _____
5. _____	10. _____

b. Choose the correct preposition from the box to complete the sentences.

- I decided to **apply** _____ the **job**.
- I have a Master's _____ Business.
- I work _____ a big technology company called *Intel*.
- I work _____ an administrator.
- I work _____ Finance.

as in(x2) for(x2)



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c. Work with a partner. Discuss the questions.

1. What do you do?
2. In your **job** or studies, what kind of personality do you need?
3. In your **job** or studies, what kind of **skills** do you need?
4. Describe a time you had a **job** interview.
5. Have you ever done a **job** interview in English?

2 Text

In this part of the lesson, you're going to watch a video filmed in London. Four Londoners talk about their **jobs** and their experiences of **job** interviews:

<http://www.onestopenglish.com/skills/listening/live-from-authentic-interviews/live-from-authentic-video-lessons/live-from-london-jobs/555738.article>

a. Watch the video. For each speaker, write the missing word from their answer to the question, "What **skills do you need for that **job**?"**

1. **Phillip:** To be a project manager you do need quite a bit of experience in the industry, and, these days, a good university _____, I suppose.
2. **Rachel:** 'Barista' training, people **skills**, and just generally, yeah, being **cheerful** and _____ to serve customers.
3. **Shazra:** For my **job** you need to be really organised. You need to think on your feet. You need to be able to write well, _____ well and things like that.
4. **Lynne:** Organisational **skills** again. Clear _____, calm, thinking on your feet, also. Most of the time I'm, I'm thinking on my feet. And good at damage limitation!

b. Watch the video again. Circle the correct word(s) to complete each sentence.

1. Phillip says that to work as a project manager, you need to be ... **creative** / **hard-working** / **tolerant**.
2. Rachel says that to work in a café, you need to be ... **cheerful** / **creative** and **patient** / **pleasant**.
3. Shazra says that to work as a project manager, you need to be ... **organised** / **sociable** / **energetic**.
4. Lynne says that to work as an administrator, you need to be ... **organised** / **clever** and **tolerant** / **calm**.

c. In your opinion, which person has had the most positive **experience of interviews?**

d. Explain the highlighted expressions from the last task in your own words.

1. You need to have **experience in the industry**.
2. You need to have **people skills**.
3. You need to be able **to think on your feet**.
4. You need to be good at **damage limitation!**

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- e. Tina is in a **job** interview for a **job** as an administrator. Use the phrases in the box to complete her answer to the question.

communication cultural awareness deadlines decision-making multitasking strength

Interviewer: What **skills** would you bring to this **role**?

Tina: I think my main ¹ _____

is in my organisational **skills**. My last **job** was in a very busy Finance Department, so I did a lot of

² _____ - performing my normal duties while answering phone calls, replying

to emails, and so on. I had to meet a lot of

³ _____ there, so

I really learned the importance of quick ⁴ _____ and clear

⁵ _____. On top of that, I know that your office is a very international

environment, which would really suit me. I've lived in the US, Brazil and France, so I'd be able to bring good ⁶ _____, as well as my language **skills**.



3 Language in Use

- a. Write one word to complete each gap. All the words are from earlier tasks in this lesson.

1. I have good _____ **skills** - I'm quite sociable and I like to connect with others on a personal level.

2. I started working in Finance as soon as I finished university, so I now have more than ten years' **experience** in the _____.

3. I have good decision-making **skills**. I'm always thinking on my _____.

4. When problems come up, it's good to have a clear _____ so that you can consider the best options.

5. I always manage to meet _____. I don't ever remember finishing a project late.

- b. Each sentence below has ONE mistake. Find it and correct it.

1. I have a Master's on Biochemistry.

2. Irina works as doctor.

3. Jeff works for **Education**. He's a teacher.

4. My main strong is in my people **skills**.

5. I have a lot of **experience** in giving presentations, so I'd move that **skill** to this new **role**.

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4 Communication

Work in pairs. You are going to complete a **job** interview. Follow the instructions on the role card which your teacher gives you.

5 Discuss

Discuss the questions with your classmate.

Reflect on your **job** interview from the last task:

- how did you find the interview?
- which question was the easiest for you to answer?
- which question was the most difficult?
- were there any ideas which you found difficult to explain in English?

Further questions:

- in what ways is it possible to prepare for a **job** interview?
- can you think of other typical “interview” questions which haven’t been mentioned in this lesson?
- can you think of any special advice to do a good interview?

Red Words

cheerful* pleasant** patient (adjective)** organised (adjective)* calm (adjective)**
 nervous** hard-working* energetic* apply*** job*** skill*** creative** clever**
 experience (noun)*** education*** strength*** deadline* communication*** role***