



TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE INTERVIEWS

Lesson Plan

SUMMARY

Students will learn tips for effective interviews. In addition, they will watch and discuss the StoryCorps animated short, Q&A, in which 12-year-old Joshua Littman interviews his mother, Sarah. Students will apply these tips as they conduct peer interviews with a partner. As an optional homework assignment, students can be assigned to conduct an interview with a friend or family member before the next lesson.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn tips for effective interviews
- Students will practice asking effective questions by conducting an interview with a peer

STANDARDS: Common Core Standards attachment

TIME: 45 minutes

PREPARATION

- Review the lesson below
- Print out student copies of The Great Questions List or prepare to project it for the class using available technology.
- Print out student copies of the Q&A animation transcript

MATERIALS:

- Optional: student copies of The Great Questions List
- Index cards for each student
- Interactive whiteboard; or a computer with connection to the Internet, a projector & speakers



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WARM-UP: THE BIG SHARE (8 minutes)

1. Provide each student with an index card. Hand out student copies of The Great Questions List or project it for the whole class using available technology.
2. Ask students to choose one question for someone else in the room to answer and to write it on their index card.
3. Model how the activity will work. Approach a student and ask the question you wrote on an index card. The student answers it, then asks you their question. After you have both answered a question, trade index cards. Both you and the model student will now find a new partner and ask a new question.
4. Explain that each time students talk to a new person, they will trade questions. Tell students they will all do this at the same time. Encourage students to talk to at least three different people.
5. Collect the interview questions and set them aside to use later in the lesson.
6. Ask students to move their chairs into a circle.

DEBRIEF

Facilitate a short discussion using the following prompt:

- “Which questions stood out to you?” Ask the class to snap their fingers if they agree with the responses made by other students.

ACTIVITY: TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE INTERVIEWS (10 minutes)

1. Explain to students that today’s Warm-Up focused on asking questions because they will conduct an interview with a peer. Being an effective interviewer is an important skill that takes practice to develop.
2. Explain to students that they are going to learn more about effective interviews through the 4 Tips for an Effective Interview video.
3. Play the 4 Tips for an Effective Interview video for students. You can also view the transcript of the video.



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4. Many of the questions included in the Great Questions List are designed with these guidelines in mind. Ask students which questions that were asked in the warm-up relate to the tips outlined in the video.

ACTIVITY: JOSHUA & SARAH LITTMAN'S STORY – Q&A ANIMATION

(10 minutes)

1. Tell students they are now going to watch a StoryCorps animation of an interview between a mom and her 12-year-old son, Joshua Littman, who has Asperger's syndrome. Explain that Asperger's syndrome may cause someone to have difficulty interacting socially and that people with Asperger's often demonstrate intense interests or obsessions, for example with chess or bugs. Someone with Asperger's may also engage in repetitive behavior, like hand waving.
2. Play the Q & A animation for students for students. You can also view the transcript of the animation.
3. Ask a volunteer to summarize the clip. Invite other volunteers to add to the summary.
4. Sample summary: "In this interview, Joshua asks his mom about animals, enemies, and what it's like to be a parent."
5. Distribute copies of the transcript of Joshua and Sarah Littman's recording. Ask students to underline the effective interview questions Joshua asked his mother.
6. Ask students to share examples of Joshua's questions and discuss why these questions were effective or not, based on what they learned in the 4 Tips for an Effective Interview video.

ACTIVITY: INTERVIEWING A PEER (10 minutes)

1. Explain that students will now conduct peer interviews with each other to practice the tips for effective interviews.
2. Ask students to brainstorm effective questions they might ask a peer. Examples include the following:
 - What are you proudest of?
 - What is the hardest thing you have ever had to do?



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- Who has had the biggest influence on your life and how?
1. Ask students to choose one question that will be the start of their interview with a peer. The question should follow the tips for an effective question. It can be one of the questions from your brainstorm, a question from the Warm-Up, or they can come up with a new question.
 2. Pair up students by counting off. If you have a group of 20, for example, count off one to ten and match students with the same number. If there are an uneven number of students, you can participate.
 3. Let students know that everyone will have a chance to be interviewer and interviewee. Ask each pair to decide who will be the first to conduct an interview.
 4. Explain that each person will have 3 minutes to interview their peer. You will announce when 3 minutes have elapsed so that students can switch roles.

DEBRIEF

Facilitate a short discussion using the following questions:

- What was it like to interview a peer?
- Which of the interviewing tips did you use, and how did it help you as the interviewer?
- As an interviewee, did you feel that the interviewer truly heard your answers? If so, what did the interviewer do or ask to make you believe this?
- What more could an interviewer do to show you that s/he is truly listening to you?



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CLOSING GO-AROUND & OPTIONAL HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT (7 minutes)

Explain to students that their homework assignment is to conduct an interview with a friend, family member, or someone else they know about something important from their past. Encourage students to use the 4 Tips for Effective Interviews video and the Great Questions List from today's lesson. They can use these questions or write their own.

Ask students to sit or stand in a circle. One at a time, in clockwise fashion, have students complete the following prompts:

- One person I'd like to interview for my homework is...
- Something important I would like to ask this person is ...