

Job interviews: Part 2: Audio and activities

by Jamie Keddie

Level: Upper intermediate and above

Time: 60 minutes

Language focus:

• Answers given to the eight standard interview questions.

Materials:

• Audio files for the three interviews
• Accompanying worksheets

... talk about previous achievements, results and **work experience**.

... talk about **skills** that are **relevant** to the new **position**.

... **sell** himself / herself.

... have **researched** the company / employer.

... not give **general** answers to questions.

Listening for general understanding

Introduction

- 1 Give your students copies of the advert for the position of 'Office Manager for Slinky Stationery'.
- 2 Find out if anyone knows the difference between the words *stationery* and *stationary* and explain if necessary.
- 3 Tell your students that they are going to hear three interviews for the advertised position.

8 Tell your students that they are going to hear interview 1 again followed by interviews 2 and 3. Tell them that you want each person to decide who they feel is the best and who is the worst candidate for the job.

9 Play all three interviews.

10 Have a secret ballot: Get each student to write on a scrap piece of paper who they think is the best candidate and who they think is the worst. For example:

Best – candidate 3
Worst – candidate 2

11 Have everyone put their pieces of paper into a box, empty them out, count the votes and announce the winner / loser.

Revision

- 4 Find out if your learners can recall the eight standard interview questions and elicit these (you will probably have to offer some grammatical help).
- 5 Tell your learners that they are going to hear the first interview. Tell them that you want them to listen out for the questions and put them into the order in which they are asked.
- 6 Play interview 1 (twice if necessary).

Listening for detail / discussion

12 Ask your students how they came to their decisions. For example, find out exactly why they thought candidate 3 was the best and candidate 2 was the worst.

13 Tell the students that they are going to hear the interviews again and, this time, they are to concentrate on the applicants' answers. Tell them that you want them to make very brief notes on:

- Positive aspects of each candidate's performance.
- Aspects of each candidate's performance which could be improved.

Vocabulary activation

7 Ask your students to complete the gap-fill exercise.

Answers:

When **applying** for a job, the ideal interview candidate will ...
... be **prepared**.

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14 Play the first interview, ask your students to offer suggestions and then play it again for confirmation. Repeat this process for the other two interviews (NB encourage your students to use language from the language activation gap-fill while they talk about the candidates' answers).

15 Give out the transcriptions and let your students read them while they listen to all three interviews.

- There seems to be a lot of potential at Slinky Stationery for me to use the skills I have acquired...
- I am a very organised person.
- I'm good at dealing with people.
- Slinky Stationery ... seems like such a dynamic, forward-thinking organization.
- What would I be doing on a day-to-day basis, what would the day-to-day tasks be?

Listening for detail

16 Get everyone to turn over and hide their transcriptions (it might actually be better to collect them back in).

17 Give out the *Who's who?* worksheets and have your students complete them.

18 Play all three interviews again and let your students check their work.

19 Give back the transcriptions.

Answers:

Candidate 1

- I did an Economics degree at University.
- I feel that I could play a key role in the development of the company.
- I am looking for new challenges.
- I can get a bit too involved with work.
- I was ready to take on more responsibilities.
- I would like to be managing my own business.

Candidate 2

- I work quite hard, I think, sometimes.
- I've got lots of experience on my CV.
- I'll call you back, sorry.
- I get on really well with people.
- I'm looking forward to the freebies.
- I got bored, just doing the same thing over and over and I wanted a change.

Candidate 3

- I've been working for a small stationery company for the last year...

Language practice

20 On a separate sheet of paper, get each student to translate the sentences from the *Who's who?* worksheet into their own language.

21 Put students into pairs and have each pair test themselves: one student reads out the sentences in his/her partner's language while the partner attempts to translate them back into English. Roles then reverse.

Job interviews: Part 2

by Jamie Keddie

Vocabulary activation

Complete the following. Fill in the gaps with the words below.

When _____ for a job, the ideal interview candidate will...

... be _____.

... talk about previous achievements, results and _____.

... talk about _____ that are _____ to the new _____.

... _____ himself / herself.

... have _____ the company / employer.

... not give _____ answers to questions.

applying
relevant

experience
researched

general
sell skills

position
work

prepared

Job advert

Office Manager

Do you know the difference between *stationery* and *stationary*? Are you organized, experienced and efficient? Slinky Stationery is the fastest growing stationery company in Europe. We provide quality stationery products to offices from Slough to Stuttgart.

We're looking for an office manager for our London headquarters. The ideal candidate will have exceptional organizational and interpersonal skills, as well as the ability to work to tight deadlines.

For further details and an application form, contact
Slinky Stationery Recruitment Services by
December 13th (quote ref 62563/G and give your name and address).
59 Compass Street
Old Town
Online: www.slinkystationery.com
Closes December 16th

Job interviews: Part 2

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Who's who?

Look at the following statements. Can you remember who said what? On each space, write one of the following:

Candidate 1

Candidate 2

Candidate 3

- I am a very organized person. _____
- I am looking for new challenges. _____
- I can get a bit too involved with work. _____
- I did an Economics degree at University. _____
- I feel that I could play a key role in the development of the company. _____
- I get on really well with people. _____
- I got bored, just doing the same thing over and over and I wanted a change. _____
- I was ready to take on more responsibilities. _____
- I work quite hard, I think, sometimes. _____
- I would like to be managing my own business. _____
- I'll call you back, sorry. _____
- I'm good at dealing with people. _____
- I'm looking forward to the freebies. _____
- I've been working for a small stationery company for the last year. _____
- I've got lots of experience on my CV. _____
- Slinky Stationery ... seems like such a dynamic, forward-thinking organization. _____
- There seems to be a lot of potential at Slinky Stationery for me to use the skills I have acquired. _____
- What would I be doing on a day-to-day basis, what would the day-to-day tasks be? _____

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Transcript**Interview 1**

Interviewer: So Julian, today we are interviewing for the position of office manager here at Slinky Stationery. At the end of the interview I will answer any questions that you might have, Okay?

Julian: Okay.

Interviewer: First of all, can you tell me a little bit about yourself?

Julian: Um, well, I'm from Australia and, uh, I've got a really keen interest in business. I did an Economics degree at University and, um, I love travelling and I love working hard.

Interviewer: And why should we recruit you?

Julian: Um, I think I am really good with people and I have a very good worth, work ethic. Um, I uh, am good with computers and, um, I like to use my mind.

Interviewer: What do you know about our company?

Julian: Um, I had a look at your website and was quite interested by your product range. I noticed that you stock over 25, 000 competitively priced products and seem to be continually looking for new ways to expand the business and improve your customer service. I guess I feel that I could play a key role in the development of the company.

Interviewer: Good! And why do you want to work here?

Julian: Um, I suppose I am really interested in getting some experience in a managerial role. As yet, um, I've only had limited experience, but I enjoy, um, managing people and I am looking for new challenges.

Interviewer: And what do you feel are your weaknesses?

Julian: Um, I think sometimes I can get a bit too involved with work. Sometimes I can take it home and, uh, and I find it a bit hard to switch off. But otherwise I think um, generally, uh, you know I bring a positive influence to the work environment.

Interviewer: Okay. And why did you leave your last job?

Julian: Um, I suppose in my last job, I, uh, I didn't really feel like there was much scope to progress in the company and I really felt like, um, I was ready to take on more responsibilities, which is why I am applying for more of a management role, um, such as this job.

Interviewer: And, where do you see yourself in five or ten year's time?

Julian: Um, I suppose in five or ten years' time I would probably like to be managing my own business. Um, I suppose, being in control of my business life has always been a passion of mine. So I hope that in five to ten years I can achieve that.

Interviewer: And, finally, do you have any questions that you would like to ask us?

Julian: Um, I suppose the biggest thing would be, um, how would performance be measured and reviewed?

Interviewer: Okay, well, we organize appraisals twice yearly, where we set and review targets and consider any training requirements. This is also an opportunity for you to raise any concerns about particular aspects of your job.

Julian: Cool!

Interviewer: Okay, well thank you for coming in Julian, we'll be in touch.

Julian: Thanks for having me.

Job interviews: Part 2

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Transcript

Interview 2

- Interviewer: So Mike, today we are interviewing for the position of office manager here at Slinky Stationery. At the end of the interview I'll answer any questions that you might have, okay?
- Mike: Okay, um, sorry I'm a bit late, I missed my train.
- Interviewer: Alright. Um, first of all, can you tell us a little bit about yourself?
- Mike: Uh [pause], I like football. Um, I go out a lot. Um, I work quite hard, I think, sometimes. Um, I've got lots of experience on my CV.
[Mobile ring blares in background.]
Ooh sorry, hang on. *Hello mate! I'll call you back, sorry.*
- Interviewer: [sighing] And Mike, why should we recruit you?
- Mike: Uh, because I'm good! I'm really good. I work hard. I get on really well with people. And, um, I dunno, I like the company I think.
- Interviewer: Right, so what do you know about our company then?
- Mike: Um, not an awful lot to tell the truth. Um, I know that you make some pretty nice stationery; I'm looking forward to the freebies.
- Interviewer: And what do you think are your weaknesses?
- Mike: Uh, ooh, I'm quite a bad time-keeper. I sometimes miss my alarm and I stay in bed too late.
- Interviewer: And why did you leave your last job Mike?
- Mike: I got bored, just doing the same thing over and over and I wanted a change.
- Interviewer: And what about in five or ten years' time, where do you see yourself then?
- Mike: Ooh, uh, Spain probably!
- Interviewer: And finally, do you have any questions that you would like to ask us?
- Mike: Um, hmmn, job sounds alright. How much does it pay?
- Interviewer: Well, we tend not to discuss those details until a formal offer has been made.
- Mike: What about holiday, how many days holiday do I get?
- Interviewer: The same, we don't tend to discuss that until an offer has been made.
- Mike: Oh, okay.
- Interviewer: Okay Mike, thank you for coming in today. We'll, we'll be in touch.
- Mike: Thanks very much.

Job interviews: Part 2

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Transcript**Interview 3**

Interviewer: So Jane, today we are interviewing for the position of office manager here at Slinky Stationery. At the end of the interview, I'll answer any questions that you might have, okay?

Jane: Yup.

Interviewer: So, first of all, can you tell me a little bit about yourself!

Jane: Um, well, I've been working for a small stationery company for the last year, um, doing day-to-day admin, um, making sure the orders are sent out on time, um, liaising with other suppliers. Um, and so I am really looking now for the chance to expand and really to work for a bigger company. Um, and there seems to be a lot of potential at Slinky Stationery, um, for me to use the skills I have acquired, um, in a way that I think would be really beneficial.

Interviewer: And so why should we recruit you, do you feel that your personality is suited to the role of office manager?

Jane: Well, I definitely feel that I am a very organized person. Um, and also I found in my last job that people would get very stressed and annoyed if there were problems with orders, or if something wasn't going quite right or if they themselves were under pressure. So, I'd like to think that I'm good at diffusing those sorts of situations, that I'm good at dealing with people, um both people that I'm dealing with as customers and also, um, other people within the company that I'm working with, often have to be very diplomatic.

Interviewer: Okay, and Jane tell me, what do you know about Slinky Stationery as a company?

Jane: Um, well I was very impressed to see that you're the fastest growing stationery company in Europe, um, and that you've just opened an office in Germany. Um, I was looking through one of your catalogues and I, I thought that the product range looked really excellent, um, and also the delivery and the speed with which you are able to supply products was really good. Um, so that is one of the major reasons I want to work for Slinky Stationery, because it seems like such a dynamic, forward-thinking organization.

Interviewer: And what would you say are your main weaknesses?

Jane: Um, I think there are certain things that maybe I could have more experience of and I think, I mean, obviously the company I've been working for is quite small, so I haven't had the opportunity to work with a h..., a large number of the people in the way that this job would require. But, I really think that's something that I could grow in experience and really kind of, really improve.

Interviewer: Okay, and why did you leave your last job?

Jane: Um, well, I just really felt that having been there for a couple of months, sorry, for a year, that it was really time to move on, that I'd given what I could give to the company, and I and they are both looking for fresh ideas. That I could have a lot to give somewhere else and that they would benefit from someone new giving a fresh approach to the organization.

Interviewer: Okay, and where do you see yourself in five or ten years time?

Job interviews: Part 2
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Jane: Well, I think doing a job that I find interesting, that whether that's in stationery, or whether that's in something else, but I think the crucial thing about this role is, I'm really interested in logistics, um and in the idea of organization and the liaison with clients I think is also really important.

Interviewer: Good, and finally, do you have any questions that you'd like to ask us?

Jane: Um, well I guess what I'd like to know is what I would be doing on a day-to-day basis, what the day-to-day tasks would be?

Interviewer: Well, this is an extremely varied and interesting role. On a daily basis, you'll be carrying out duties such as writing reports, chairing meetings, delegating work and workload planning. You'll also be in control of the office budget. You will be discussing any problems that arise with staff and liaising with our senior management team.

Okay, so thank you for coming in Jane.

Jane: Thank you very much.

Interviewer: We'll be in touch.