



## SONOMA COUNTY WORK-READY CERTIFICATION QUINTESSENTIAL CAREERS JOB INTERVIEWING QUIZ

**Lesson Plan Title:** “Quintessential Careers Job Interviewing Quiz” (by Randall S. Hansen)

**Concept/Topic to Teach:** Interviewing skills/etiquette

**General Goal(s):** Familiarize students with appropriate job interviewing etiquette

**Required Materials:**

1. Copies of the “Quintessential Careers Job Interviewing Quiz”
2. Copies of the quiz answer key and explanations of answers

**Step-by-Step Procedures:**

1. Give each student a copy of the “Quintessential Careers Job Interviewing Quiz” and give them time to complete the quiz (quiz can be taken individually or in pairs to encourage discussion of answers)
2. Once students have completed the quiz, give each student a copy of the answer key and explanations of answers (if time permits, you may want to go through the quiz question by question with the entire class)

NOTE: Quiz and answer key can be given to students to complete independently outside of class time in preparation for their WRC interview

**Closure:**

1. Debrief with all students about interviewing etiquette, any answers they were surprised by, and what they learned

# Quintessential Careers Job Interviewing Quiz

by Randall S. Hansen, Ph.D.

Think you're a job interviewing expert? Take the Quintessential Careers Job Interviewing Quiz and find out!

*Instructions: Read each question and choose the correct answer. Interested in scoring? After finishing the quiz, compare your answer to our explanation. Check your [score below](#).*

1. Which of the following is **not** one of the suggested strategies for preparing for your job interview:
  - a. conduct research on the company/industry
  - b. prepare answers to possible interview questions
  - c. gather key resources (extra resumes, reference list) to take with you
  - d. plan to ask about salary and benefits at the beginning of the interview
2. True or false: Wearing a formal suit is always the safest "dress for success" attire.
  - a. true
  - b. false
3. True or false: Being the most qualified candidate for the position just about guarantees you will get the job.
  - a. true
  - b. false
4. The STAR (situation, task, action, results) Technique refers to a tool you should consider using for developing answers to what type of interview questions?
  - a. traditional/conventional
  - b. psychological
  - c. behavioral
  - d. historical
5. True or false: Greeting the receptionist/assistant when you arrive and treating him or her with respect is an important key to your success.
  - a. true
  - b. false
6. Which part of the interview is the **most** important?
  - a. first minute
  - b. answers to the "toughest" questions
  - c. final minute
  - d. the whole time
7. What are three **most** important keys to success in interviews?
  - a. good cologne, nice smile, fresh breath
  - b. making eye contact, showing enthusiasm, speaking clearly
  - c. fresh breath, nice smile, making eye contact
  - d. developing rapport, good posture, fresh breath
8. It's best to arrive how early before an interview?
  - a. 1 hour
  - b. 30 minutes
  - c. 10 minutes
  - d. 1 minute
9. True or false: You should use only examples from your actual work experience to answer the question during a job interview.
  - a. true
  - b. false
10. The best thing to do in an interview when you get a question that stumps you temporarily is:
  - a. sit there and just stare at the interviewer
  - b. keep saying, "good question, good question"
  - c. respond with, "I just really can't answer that"
  - d. paraphrase the question while giving yourself time to think
11. True or false: Taking detailed notes in an interview is an accepted practice.
  - a. true
  - b. false

12. When the interviewer asks you the question, "tell me about yourself," s/he really wants what in response?
  - a. a 10-minute detailed story of your life, from birth to present
  - b. a concise narrative of your personal and professional background and goals and how they relate to the job at hand
  - c. a short narrative of your personal life, leaving nothing to the imagination
  - d. a long-winded account of your last vacation
13. How should you respond to the question, "where do you see yourself in five years?"
  - a. "I just want to be at a place in my life when I'm happy with who I am -- the job I'm doing would have to support that."
  - b. "I could see myself starting my own business."
  - c. "I would hope I am still with this organization in a position of increased responsibility, making a vital contribution to its success."
  - d. "I just want to have a steady income that I am satisfied with and that allows me to be financially independent."
14. The best way to answer the question, "Why do you want to work for our company," is by saying:
  - a. "You've been the market leader for the past five years because of the reputation of your products and quality of customer satisfaction and I would like to contribute my services to continue the organization's successes."
  - b. "You've been the market leaders for the past five years, and I think it would be really great for my career to work for your organization."
  - c. "I love the fact that I can dress in jeans every day and that the office is only a five minute bike ride from the beach."
  - d. "I'm really attracted by the great salary and benefits your company offers."
15. True or false: If you're asked to discuss your current boss, whom you dislike, you should tell the truth about him.
  - a. true
  - b. false
16. If you are returning to the workforce or have gaps in your employment history and are asked about what you were doing during that time, you should:
  - a. talk about volunteering or consulting work you completed
  - b. mention that being a parent takes top priority in your life
  - c. discuss the long mourning period over the loss of a loved one
  - d. state that you tend to need breaks between jobs
17. True or false: No matter what, you should always ask a question when the interviewer asks if you have any questions about the job or the company.
  - a. true
  - b. false
18. Which of the following is **not** one of the most common mistakes job-seekers make during job interviews:
  - a. limp, clammy handshake
  - b. over-emphasis on money
  - c. lack of interest and enthusiasm
  - d. too much knowledge of the company
19. True or false: At the end of the interview, you should always ask about the next step in the process.
  - a. true
  - b. false
20. As soon as you get back from the interview, you should:
  - a. put your feet up and relax, knowing you did a great interview
  - b. spend hours kicking yourself for some poor answers you gave
  - c. immediately fire off thank you letters to each person who interviewed with you
  - d. quit your current job in anticipation of a new job offer

## Answer Key and Explanations

1. **Answer:** The answer is D. We don't mean to imply that you should not do any research on salaries; of course you should! But raising the issue of money and benefits early in a first interview is seen as premature and presumptuous; wait for the offer.

A critical factor leading to interview success is preparation. You need to do research on the company and industry so that you can show off your knowledge in the interview. You should also spend some time prepping for the interview by preparing answers to typical interview questions - and practicing those answers in a mock situation, if possible. Finally, you should also go into an interview with resources the employer may want, such as extra resumes, a list of references, work samples, etc.

2. **Answer:** The answer is A. While there have been many companies and industries that have become known for their informality, it is still safer to dress on the side of conservatism than informality. Remember that first impressions are quite important and a positive first impression can get the interview off to a good start.

What's the real answer? Call the company and ask about the expected dress at interviews. If you know someone who works at the company, ask her. Otherwise, someone in the human resources department would be more than happy to tell you.

3. **Answer:** The answer is B. We have been in so many situations where the person who looked best on paper fell flat in the interview and was not offered the job. Being the most qualified gets you the interview; you need to do the rest once you're there. Don't ever fall into the trap of thinking that you don't need to prepare for an interview because you are the perfect candidate or it will only lead to disappointment.

Remember that the goal of the interview is to sell the employer on the vision of your impact to the organization and the job at hand.

4. **Answer:** The answer is C. The behavioral job interview is based on the theory that past performance is the best indicator of future behavior, and uses questions that probe specific past behaviors, such as: "tell me about a time where you confronted an unexpected problem," "tell me about an experience when you failed to achieve a goal," and "give me a specific example of a time when you managed several projects at once." Job-seekers need to prepare for these interviews by recalling scenarios that fit the various types of behavioral interviewing questions. The STAR Technique is a tool that help your organize and plan your responses to these types of questions.

5. **Answer:** The answer is A. This gesture is so small, yet we cannot stress this point often enough: receptionists and assistants are key people within organizations and many employers will ask them about the manners of the candidates - so make sure you introduce yourself in a professional and friendly manner. Those candidates who think a little too highly of themselves may ignore -- or even be rude to -- the "little people." And candidates who have that behavior in an interviewing situation would only be worse if they were to become employees, so employers tend to shy away from candidates with these attitudes.

6. **Answer:** The answer is D. You need to stay focused on the entire interview in order to move to the next step -- either more interviews or the job offer.

Of course, all these elements are important. The first minute of an interview is critical; interviewers often make first and lasting impressions on how you are dressed, on the firmness of your handshake, on your confidence, and on all elements in that initial minute.

Finally, don't ignore the final minute. Always remember that the interview is like a sales call, where you are selling the employer on hiring you. In sales lingo, we call it closing the deal. Make sure you use that final minute to restate your interest in the job (possibly even asking for the job), as well as determine the next step in the process.

7. **Answer:** The answer is B. All of the answers contain good ideas. You certainly want to smell good (or at least not smell bad) and have fresh breath, and we discuss these and other preparation issues in our [Dress for Success](#) article.

Employers rate showing enthusiasm (for the job, company, industry) and making eye contact as the most important keys to success at interviews. Since interviews are a conversation between the potential employee and the employer, speaking clearly (and loud enough) is also vital.

8. **Answer:** The answer is C. If you said an hour, you must be one of those people that arrive at airports hours before your plane is scheduled to take-off. And if you said one minute, you must be one of those "last minute" kind of people. These two answers are extremes, but they happen all the time.

You should plan on arriving about 10 minutes before the start of the interview. This amount of time gives you a little slack for unexpected events (such as the elevators not working) and time to complete an employment application or other paperwork before the interview.

Before we leave this subject, one more tip: plan ahead! Make sure you know the exact location of the interview -- and even take a practice run if you're not sure about it. We know one job candidate who was going to her most important interview -- the job and company of her dreams -- but the night before the interview she realized she wasn't really sure where the office was located and instead of doing something about it, she just "winged it" the next day and showed up about 30 minutes late and did not even get an interview, let alone the job.

9. **Answer:** The answer is B. Ideally, most of your answers will relate to experiences you had on the job, but we can learn valuable lessons about work-related issues (leadership, teamwork, etc.) from areas outside the office, such as with volunteering, community work, sports, and personal relationships.

For high school students and recent grads especially, employers are not going to expect that all your responses will be related to work experiences. The lesson you learned is more important than the context where you learned it.

10. **Answer:** The correct answer is D. Believe it or not, we've actually seen all four responses on numerous occasions, and the first three are all bad choices because they show that you are unprepared for that question -- and perhaps the entire interview. You need to respond, and you need to do so in a positive and constructive manner.

Does even the most experienced interviewee get stumped? Of course, and that's where you need to have a strategy to gain a little more time to compose an answer. You don't have to paraphrase the question -- brief periods of silence are okay -- just make sure to give yourself some time to compose an answer.

11. **Answer:** The answer is B. Experts disagree on this subject a bit, but the majority feel that it's just not a wise idea to spend the entire interview taking notes because you need to use that time to be thinking and responding and selling yourself, not passively taking notes.

You should, however, take a notepad or paper with you, and as soon as the interview is over, spend a few minutes writing down the key points made during the interview -- so you can use some of those points in your thank you letter.

12. **Answer:** The answer is B. This question is one of the more common ones in interviews and a good way for the interviewer to get some insight into the candidate, but you might be surprised to learn how many people answer this question incorrectly. This question gives you the chance to sell yourself specifically to the position.

The interviewer wants a snapshot of you -- as described by you -- in about two minutes or less. The interviewer does not want to *really* know about you, s/he wants to know the part about you that makes you an ideal candidate for the job at hand, so be prepared to discuss how your education and experience relate to the job opening.

13. **Answer:** The answer is C. Believe it or not, all these answers are fairly common responses. Perhaps some of these applicants forget that while honesty is important in an interview, you do not need to discuss all the truth -- even if you *really* do see yourself running your own business in five years.

Once again, we cannot stress enough that while your responses need to be based on facts, when you are asked about a hypothetical situation set in the future, it's best to respond in a way that inspires confidence that you are the right person for the job -- selling the employer on your potential.

14. **Answer:** The answer is A. This question is another one you should anticipate because it gives you the opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge of the company. You might discuss the company's reputation, strength of products, highly touted management, recent growth or acquisitions, or other positive information you have gathered during your research.

Always avoid answers that focus on the benefits to you of working for the company and, instead, focus on what you can do for the company.

15. **Answer:** The answer is B. It is **never** a good idea to badmouth a current or former boss or company. Always speak positively about your current and former employers. Remember that the point of an interview is selling yourself to the employer and what do you think it says about yourself if you are willing to say negative things about your boss or company?

If you're asked about your current boss, it's probably a question about the type of management style you prefer, so you should probably direct your answer there.

16. **Answer:** The answer is A. Believe it or not, lots of people end up having employment gaps on their resumes -- for all sorts of reasons. Your goal is to put the best spin on the gap. If you did, in fact, work as a volunteer or consultant, or if you went back to school for additional training relevant to the position, use these reasons to explain the gap(s).

And remember -- **never** raise the issue yourself. In fact, make sure you never raise any negative issues during an interview.

17. **Answer:** The answer is A. This question is one of those heuristics (rule of thumb) employers use to make a quick judgment about a candidate, thus a person who does not have any questions equates to a person who really is not interested in working for the company.

So, even if you think all your questions have been answered, you really need to have a few special questions in reserve -- ones that can also show off your knowledge about the company -- such as, "how will the new distribution center you're building in Florida affect your southeast deliveries?"

18. **Answer:** The answer is D. Can you ever really have too much information about a company?

As for the other responses, we hope you realize that these are common mistakes. A firm handshake makes a great first impression. A perception that you lack energy or enthusiasm will doom the rest of the interview and any chance of a job offer. And an over-emphasis on money shows that your priorities may be skewed.

19. **Answer:** The answer is A. You might say something such as, "Ms. Jones, I feel very positive about the fit between your needs and my abilities to do the job, and I would like to take this to the next step. Is there anything in my background or anything we discussed today that would keep me from going to the next step?" As with all aspects of job-hunting, you must be proactive and show initiative.

20. **Answer:** The answer is C. It's a simple gesture of courtesy and respect, but one that will give you an extra little edge over the other candidates -- especially the ones who do not send thank-you letters. Thank you letters also give you an opportunity to do a number of other things, such as restate your interest in and enthusiasm for the job; express your fit with the qualifications for the position; send additional materials requested by the employer; stress the rapport you felt with the interviewer; and much more.

## Scoring:

*Whatever your score, the real purpose of this quiz has already been accomplished -- getting you better prepared for job interviewing -- so use the results you get to work on developing an even better understanding of the job interviewing process, which should result in a more rewarding effort on your part.*

Number of questions you answered correctly: **19-20:** You're in great shape and should do well in job interviews.

**17-18:** You're in good shape, though you need to do some polishing of your interviewing tactics.

**15-16:** You're in need of doing some real work to get a better understanding of job interviewing.

**Under 15:** You're in need of spending a lot of time learning about the job interviewing process.