

## Teacher Candidate Interview Prep

An interview is an opportunity for employers to learn more about you as a teacher candidate and your relevant knowledge, skills, and experiences, as well as your teaching philosophy and methods. It's also a great way for YOU to learn more about a school/school district and position in greater detail. Remember: an interview is a two-way conversation!

### Interview Tips

The key steps a person can take to prepare for a teacher interview include the following:

- **Research the interviewing school.** Visiting the school's website, reviewing its social media accounts, and looking up news articles online can provide you with important information about the school, its history, its connection to the community, etc.
- **Practice your interview skills** in Big Interview and receive instant AI feedback on your performance, including body language, as well as tips and suggestions for improvement:  
<https://www.winthrop.edu/cdi/big-interview.aspx>
- **Dress for success.** Interviewees should arrive at the interview professionally dressed and ready to discuss their teaching philosophy. Need something to wear? Visit the [CDI Career Closet](#) in Bancroft 312 for free professional attire! (Available during drop-in hours and by appointment.)
- **Stay positive.** Remember, your interviewers are just people! Staying positive during the interview can give the school a glimpse of how you as a prospective teacher may look in the classroom.
- **Prepare a list of questions.** At the end of the interview, it's common for the interviewer to ask if you have any questions. You might think of questions to ask during the interview itself. However, it's always good to bring a list of questions based on your research of the school. This is an opportunity for you to demonstrate your preparedness, passion for teaching, and commitment to helping students achieve their goals. Examples of questions you could ask include:
  - **Job-related questions** (typical workday, long-term expectations regarding the position, etc.)
  - **Support-related questions** (available resources like classroom technology, professional development for teachers, etc.)
  - **Student- and classroom-related questions** (class size, student-teacher ratio, curriculum flexibility, etc.)
  - **School-related questions** (school culture, new programs or initiatives, challenges the school is facing, etc.)
  - **Community-related questions** (e.g., parent involvement, communal support, activeness of PTA group, etc.)



## Common Interview Questions

### “Tell me about yourself”

When answering this question, give an introduction that highlights your background and teaching-related experiences.

- **Introduce yourself** (name, major/classification, hometown, etc.).
- **Discuss your student teaching experience** or any related classroom involvement, such as internships, tutoring, or volunteering in educational settings. Be specific about the grade levels you worked with and what you learned from those experiences.
- **Briefly mention your professional development.** Mention your involvement in relevant student organizations (e.g., Future Teachers of America, etc.) or participation in workshops, conferences, or certifications related to teaching. Also mention any special skills, such as innovative teaching methods, classroom technology, or experience working with diverse student populations.

### “What is your biggest strength/weakness?”

- When asked about your strength, make sure that it’s relevant to the position (e.g., organization/attention to detail, etc.)
- When discussing your weakness, remember that they are only looking for ONE weakness (and you get to pick which!). When mentioning your weakness, discuss how you have learned to overcome it.

### “Tell me about a time when X, Y, Z...”

- This type of question is called a behavioral interview question. To answer this question effectively, use the STAR method: describe the Situation, the Task you were given, the Actions you took, and the position Results achieved or what you learned. Providing specific examples from your experience will help to showcase your relevant skills and abilities.

## Top 8 Interview Questions from SC School Districts

1. Why do you want to be a teacher? Or... What’s your WHY?
2. How do you plan to differentiate?
3. How do you know all students are learning?
4. Tell me about a time when you led someone else?
5. How do you handle difficult situations?
6. How do you deal with failure?
7. Suppose you live in a fishbowl; how would you respond to any type of situation?
8. What is your experience with \_\_\_\_\_? (specific to each school district)
  - children of poverty
  - multi-lingual learners
  - the new ELA standards (early childhood)
  - the new math standards (early childhood/elementary)
  - the workshop model
  - children with varying needs