

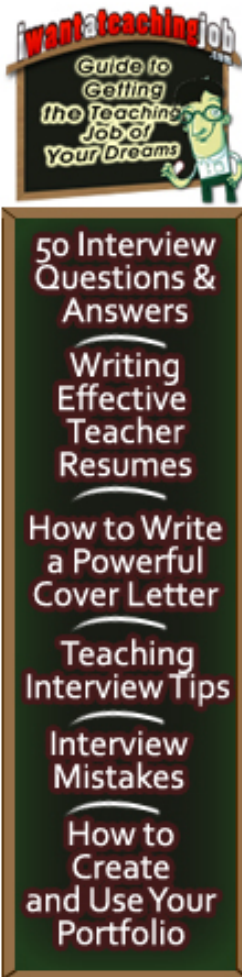
Teacher Interviews

Teacher Interviews: Common Sense and Professional Advice

by Tim Wei

Tim Wei's [Guide to Getting a Teaching Job](#) is an eBook that tells you how to answer 50 interview questions and features resume writing, cover letter tips, interview tips and more.

Download the book today!



[Guide to Getting
a Teaching Job](#)

**Everything you
need to know to
land the perfect
teaching job**

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This is the culmination of several years of hard work. You've finished college. You're done with your student teaching and you've passed all of your teacher certification examinations. The applications, resumes, and cover letters have been sent out to every local school district.

All you can do now is sit around the house and wait for the phone to ring, right? Wrong! You should be preparing for your interview!

I've been to the interview table several times as a candidate and many more times as an interviewer. If there are any tricks, secrets, or shortcuts to success in the interviewing process, I haven't discovered them. My only sound advice for candidates is to come to the interview prepared.

You should have your teaching portfolio in-hand and you should be ready to talk about anything and everything that relates to you, your background, and your philosophies on education. The best candidates know how to teach, they know how to articulate their teaching beliefs, and most of the time, they already know what types of questions will be asked before the interview even begins.

It's easy for an interviewer to spot an unprepared candidate. Candidates who have not practiced basic

interview questions beforehand are unnaturally nervous. They shift in their seats more. They begin most answers with the word, "uhhhhh." There are long pauses while interviewers wait for the candidate to process the question and think up an answer. They get confused by basic educational jargon that they learned in college.

Almost every teaching interview includes similar, common questions. In order to be a prepared candidate, all you have to do is practice answering the most common questions before you go to the interview. (See the practice interview questions chapter in my book to review the 50 most commonly asked questions.) If you prepare beforehand, the interview questions will seem routine and familiar. There are no tricks or shortcuts; if you do your homework you will perform well.

Body language can show whether you're a confident, qualified teacher or an unsure one. At the interview, be confident, but not cocky. Smile when you walk in. Greet the people interviewing you with a smile and a nod. Firmly shake the hand of the principal and other interviewers that are within easy reach. When you take your seat, sit up straight with your feet on the floor and your hands in a relaxed position on the desk.

Have a mild sense of humor. Prepare to make some humorous small talk when you are greeted. For example, if a principal shakes your hand and asks how you are, it's okay to say, "A nervous wreck!" A whimsical introduction can break the ice. Be sure your sense of humor is clean and appropriate for an interview.

Have a teaching portfolio ready. Your portfolio should contain extra copies of your resume, a copy of your teaching certificate, sample lesson plans, samples of student work, and any other evidence that shows you are a qualified candidate for a teaching position. It should be bound in a neat, professional-looking leather binder. (See the teaching portfolio chapter in my book for more information.) Place the portfolio in front of you when you sit down at the interview table.

Usually, the people interviewing you will not ask to see your portfolio. They do, however, expect you to have it on-hand. Don't wait for anyone to mention the portfolio. Instead, you should use it as a tool to describe your teaching experiences. For example, if you are asked to describe a lesson that involves teaching writing, you might say, "Yes, I can show you! I have a sample of student work that shows how I teach the writing process."

The first question at almost every interview will be: "Tell us about yourself." You should already know what you're going to say. Keep your answer reasonably brief. You can talk about the college you attended and provide an overview of your teaching experience.

Always be positive. Try not to say, "I don't know." Avoid saying, "I'm not really good at..." Don't say, "That's one of my weak points." Always tell the truth, but you don't want to suggest that you're not a confident, successful, qualified teacher. If you honestly don't know the answer to a question, you might ask the interviewer to restate it in a different way, or you might want to give the best answer you can based on your knowledge and experiences.

Use lots of examples when you answer questions. When they ask how you **would** do something, tell them how you **have already done** it. This will make you seem more experienced. For example, if an interviewer asks, "How would you use creative problem-solving in your lessons?" You might answer with, "When I was student teaching, I did a great creative problem-solving lesson when..." When you use specific examples, you're convincing the interviewers that you're more than just hypothetical talk.

The final question of your interview will most likely be, "Do you have any questions for us?" Be prepared with a thoughtful question ahead of time. While this is probably not the most important question of the interview, it is your last chance to leave a positive impression. Rather than answering with, "Not really," you should ask something philosophical or complimentary. You might ask the interviewer why they are proud of their school or what the people you'll be working with are like. Since your interviewers will probably be meeting with lots of candidates, you should use the opportunity to ask a question and make yourself stand out. And, think about it: You've been on the hot seat answering their questions for 45 minutes. You've earned the right to turn the table, even if it is just for a moment.

When you leave, the interviewers will, of course, be talking about you. They'll be filling out little forms rating your experience, qualifications, communication skills, and personality. At the end of the day, they will have about a dozen of these forms sitting on the desk. They'll look through them all and the chosen candidates will be the ones who were the most memorable, most qualified, and most prepared for the meeting. With some time and effort, that candidate can be you.

About the Author

Tim Wei is the author of *Guide to [Getting the Teaching Job You Want!](#)*

It's an eBook that describes everything you need to know about finding teaching jobs, the teaching interview process, common teacher interview questions and answers, building a teaching portfolio, resume and cover letter information and lots more!

Visit Tim's Website at:
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