



# MODULE 5: Interviewing for a Job

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# MODULE 5: INTERVIEWING FOR A JOB

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## Overview

Welcome to Module 5 of the English for Career Development MOOC! Job seekers need to present themselves well by describing their skills effectively. Another important skill is asking and answering questions in a job interview. Through several video lectures and sample media, you will learn about the types of questions asked in a formal job interview. At the end of the unit, you will answer a job interview question. Supplemental resources will focus on using social media for networking and current trends in the workplace.

## Learning Objectives:

By the end of this unit, you will:

- Distinguish different types of questions used in job interviews,
- Identify new fundamental vocabulary, and practice using that new vocabulary in course activities,
- Read, watch, and listen to a variety of texts and multimedia sources. Show us you understand these texts and key course concepts through comprehension check quizzes,
- Prepare and answer an interview question briefly and clearly.

## Module 5 To-Do List

*To successfully complete Module 5, please do the following:*

1. **Review:** Module 5 videos, presentations, and articles. (1 - 2 hours)
2. **Discuss:** Optional: Join your colleagues in a group discussion about interviews (30 minutes)
3. **Check-In:** Complete the following quizzes:
  - a. Interview Jeopardy\* (20 minutes)
  - b. Reading Practice: Interview Tips (30 minutes)
  - c. Listening / Reading Practice: Five Illegal Questions in the U.S. (30 minutes)
  - d. Matching Answers to Questions in the U.S.\* (20 minutes)
  - e. Module 1 Check (5 minutes)

## MODULE 5 KEY VOCABULARY

Module 5 will feature the following key vocabulary words. They will be **highlighted in bold**. You can return to this page to review as needed. These words may appear in quizzes throughout the course.

## clarification (n)



Definition: When you don't understand something the interviewer says, you ask for **clarification**, to make the question clearer.

Sample sentence: It is a good idea to ask for **clarification** or repetition if you don't understand the question.

## an interviewee (n)



Definition: In an interview, the **interviewee** is the person answering the questions.

Sample Sentence: Good **interviewees** have some strategies that allow them to better understand what the interviewer is saying

## interviewer (n)



Definition: In an interview, the **interviewer** is the one asking the questions.

**Sample Sentence:** Job seekers should prepare a list of questions that they want to ask the **interviewer** about the company or about the job itself.

## repetition (n)



Definition: **Repetition** happens when you ask the interviewer to repeat, or say again, something you didn't understand.

Sample Sentence: If you don't understand the question, asking for **repetition** is a good strategy.

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## Overview of the Job Interview

English for Career Development

The video for this lesson is available online. Please find the transcript for the lesson below.

Hello and welcome to the final unit in career development. In this unit, we're going to talk about the last step in the job search process, the job interview. By now, you've written a great resume and cover letter, you've practiced your networking elevator speech, and you've got a job interview.

In this video, we will go over some important things to know about job interviews in the United States. This is your chance to answer questions about your skills and qualifications, ask questions about the job or the company, and make a positive impression on the employer.

In later videos, we will focus on the language of questions, show you some sample questions you could hear in a job interview, and how to answer them.



*A job interview*

Let's begin with some basic information about job interviews. A job interview is a formal meeting between an employer and a job seeker to decide if the person should get the job.



*The interviewer asks a question.*

The employer is called **the interviewer** and is the person asking the questions.



*The interviewee responds.*

The job seeker is called **the interviewee** and is the person answering the questions.

Job interviews are usually in person or face-to-face and are quite formal. Sometimes, interviews can be done by phone or video conference.

To be more successful, job seekers can prepare for an interview by practicing answers with specific examples of their skills and qualifications from their past experience.

## Preparing for a job interview

Interviews are a great chance to explain your qualifications and transferable skills with examples or short stories. For example, many employers look for people who can show leadership skills or creativity in solving problems. You can prepare answers that show you have these skills by using examples from your past work experiences or education. Remember, you're not memorizing answers but just preparing some short specific examples that you can use to answer common interview questions. For example, if an interviewer said, "tell me about a time that you solved a problem," I would talk about how I created a document to help other teachers plan their schedules.

Here's another example question. If the interviewer says, "what did you learn from working at XYZ company?" I would answer by saying, "I learned many things about new software and computer programs to manage information in a busy office."

By having a short, prepared example, I would feel more confident in my answer. I can always add more information in the interview and give more details. But at least I have something to say when an interviewer asks these questions.

Sometimes interview questions can be difficult to answer. It is a good idea to ask for **clarification** or **repetition** if you don't understand the question. You will learn how to do this in a later video.

Before an interview, job seekers should prepare a list of questions that they want to ask the interviewer about the company or about the job itself. By asking two or three questions, the candidate shows interest in the job and the company.

Some examples of possible questions to ask are:

1. What are the daily responsibilities of this job?
2. What computer equipment or software does the company use?

## Make a positive first impression



Finally, job seekers should make a positive impression by looking professional. They do this by wearing professional clothes such as a business suit or dress. You should be on time or early to the interview. During the interview, keep eye contact with the interviewer. Give clear and honest answers and bring extra copies of important documents like resumes or certifications.

## Summary

In summary, job seekers should be prepared for job interviews with examples of their skills and qualifications to answer the questions. Job seekers should also ask a couple of questions about the organization or the job duties. And finally, job seekers should make a positive impression by presenting themselves professionally.

## What's Next?

Now, practice your reading skills with a short practice quiz about job interviews.

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4. **a positive first impression** [“Untitled Image”](#) by [Werner Heiber](#) from [Pixabay](#) under [Pixabay license](#).

>>>> Please note that this quiz can only be completed in Canvas. <<<<

## Directions:

All questions in this practice quiz refer to the reading, "Interview Tips." You are allowed to refer to this reading as you answer these questions.

You can take this quiz as many times as you want, and your highest score will be kept.

Note: This is an optional reading practice activity. You do not need to pass this quiz in order to pass the course and receive the digital badge and certificate.

## Interview Tips



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### **Job Interviews are your chance to sell your skills and abilities.**

Job Interviews also give you a chance to find out if the job and company are right for you. Follow the tips here to be successful in your interviews.

### **Review common interview questions.**

Practice answering them with someone else or in front of a mirror. Come prepared with examples or short stories that relate to the skills that the employer wants, while emphasizing your:

- Strengths
- Flexibility
- Leadership skills
- Ability and interest to learn new things
- Additions to the organizations in which you have worked or volunteered
- Creativity in solving problems and working with people

Before the interview, know how well you qualify for the job. For each requirement listed in the job advertisement, write down your qualifications. This can show you if you don't have a particular skill. Plan how you will talk about that in the interview to persuade the interviewer that you can learn the skill.

**Make a list of questions that you would like to ask during the interview.** Pick questions that will demonstrate your interest in the job and the company. This might include commenting on the news you learned from the

company website, and then asking a question related to it. Also ask questions about the job you will be expected to perform, like:

- What are the day-to-day responsibilities of this job?
- How will my responsibilities and performance be measured? By whom?
- Could you explain your company structure?
- What computer equipment and software do you use?
- What is the organization's plan for the next five years?

**Be prepared.** Remember to bring important items to the interview:

- Notebook and pens to take notes
- Extra copies of your resume and a list of references
- Copies of letter(s) of recommendation, licenses, transcripts, etc.
- Portfolio of work samples

**On the day of the interview, remember to:**

- Plan your schedule so you arrive 10 to 15 minutes early.
- Go alone.
- Look professional. Dress in a manner appropriate to the job.
- Leave your MP3 player, coffee, soda, or backpack at home or in your car.
- Turn off your cell phone.
- Bring your sense of humor and SMILE!

**Display confidence during the interview,** but let the interviewer start the conversation. Send a positive message with your body language.

- Shake hands firmly, but only if a hand is offered to you first.
- Maintain eye contact.
- Listen carefully. Welcome all questions, even the difficult ones, with a smile.
- Give honest, direct answers.
- Develop answers in your head before you respond. If you don't understand a question, ask for it to be repeated or clarified. You don't have to rush, but you don't want to appear indecisive.

**End the interview with a good impression.** A positive end to the interview is another way to ensure your success.

- Be courteous and allow the interview to end on time.
- Restate any strengths and experiences that you might not have emphasized earlier.
- Mention a particular accomplishment or activity that fits the job.
- If you want the job, say so!
- Find out if there will be additional interviews.
- Ask when the employer plans to make a decision.
- Ask for a business card or contact information of the interviewer(s). Don't forget to send a thank-you note or letter after the interview.

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. *Interview Tips* (n.d.). Web: <http://www.careeronestop.org/workerreemployment/jobsearch/interview/interview-tips.aspx>

## LESSON 2: ANSWERING TYPICAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS



## Answering Typical Questions

English for Career Development



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The video for this lesson is available online. Please find the transcript for the lesson below.

Hi there! In this video, we are going to discuss some typical interview questions. We will discuss two types of these questions and finally look at a few questions you should ask in an interview.

In a typical interview, the interviewer, or interviewers as sometimes there may be more than one person, is there to find out if you are the right person for the job.

If you are in an interview or preparing for one, then congratulations. You have got this far because the employer is seriously considering you as a possible employee. However, you now need to show them that you really are the person for the job. You can do this by answering the questions the interviewer asks you in an honest and detailed way. Honest, because the interviewer wants to know if you are the same person, you say you are in your resume and cover letter. And detailed because you want to give enough information in your responses.

### Direct interview questions

During an interview, some questions will be direct, and some will be indirect. Examples of direct questions are:

- Why are you a good fit for this job?
- Why do you want to work for this company?"

These questions should be pretty clear to understand and answer. Since both questions use “why” you should give reasons in your answers.

So, you might say in your response, “I believe I'm a good fit for this company because I have the necessary skills and experience to fit right in and help the company grow.”

### Indirect interview questions

However, indirect questions are more difficult to recognize. An example of an indirect question is:

- So, tell me a little bit about yourself.

It's called an indirect question because the question doesn't begin with a wh- word, like what, where, when, why, who, and how, which direct questions often use. However, it is still a question, and you need to listen carefully during the interview for these types of indirect questions.

Let's look at another example of an indirect question:

- I wonder if you could tell me about a time when you faced a challenge and you overcame that challenge.

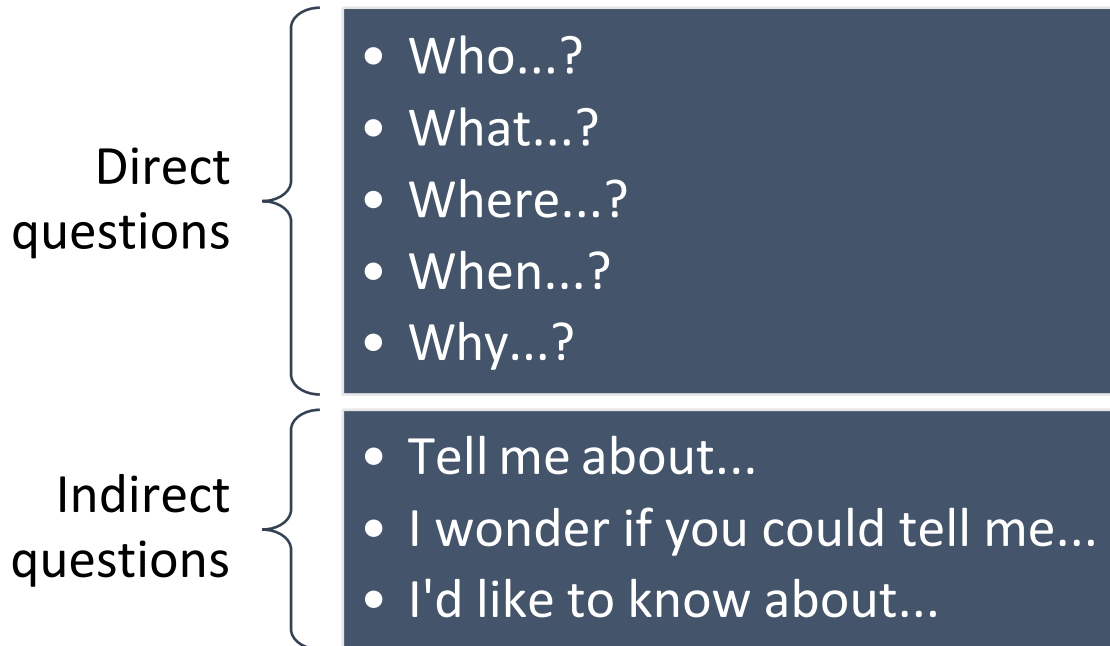
Again, no wh- word is used at the beginning of the question, but the interviewer uses the expression, “I wonder if you could tell me.”

The interviewer is asking you to share an example from your own life when you had a challenge or a problem and explain how you solve that problem. So, when you hear this expression, you should recognize it as a question and be ready to answer it.

One final example of an indirect question is:

- I'd like to know what type of skills you have that make you qualified for this job.

The speaker uses the expression "I'd like to know," which means "can you tell me?"



### Preparing your own questions

Finally, in a typical interview in the US, not only does the interviewer ask you questions but you will usually have an opportunity at the end of the interview to ask your own questions. The interviewer might say, "do you have any questions for me?" Or "do you have any questions of your own?"

To make a good impression, it's really important that you have already prepared at least two questions before the interview, and you ask these at this point. The questions should be related to the job or organization in some way.

So, for example, you might ask, "what opportunities are there for professional development in this company?" Or "what is the next step in the interview process?"

So, now we've discussed some common questions in job interviews.

Next, we're going to look at some ways you can ask for clarification in an interview when you don't understand the question. Thanks for watching.



## Language Focus: Asking for Clarification in an Interview

English for Career Development



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The video for this lesson is available online. Please find the transcript for the lesson below.

Hello, in this video, we'll be looking at asking for clarification and repetition in an interview. We will discuss what asking for clarification and repetition means and give some examples of each. Clarification is when you don't understand something the interviewer says. So, you ask him or her to make it clear. Repetition is when you ask the interviewer to repeat or say again, something that they said.



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In a job interview, there may be times when you won't understand every question an interviewer asks you. This may be especially true if you're doing an interview in a language that is not your first, such as English. It is perfectly normal that sometimes you won't understand everything the interviewer asks you. You shouldn't panic. Good interviewees have the same difficulty, but they usually have some strategies, or ways of working around a difficulty, that allow them to better understand what the interviewer is asking. Asking for clarification and repetition are two such strategies.

Let's imagine the interviewer just asked you the following question, "could you tell me what kind of skills you might bring to this position?"

Now, let's say you don't understand the question. We're going to look at three useful expressions you can use to either ask the interviewer for clarification or repetition.

I'm sorry, I didn't understand your question. Could you repeat that, please?

The first expression is, "I'm sorry, I didn't understand your question. Could you repeat that, please?"

The interviewee begins by apologizing for not understanding what was said, "I'm sorry." This shows politeness. The interviewee then goes on to say that here she didn't understand. "I didn't understand your question." Finally, the interviewee asks politely, if the interviewer could repeat the question by saying, "could you repeat that, please?"

Notice how "could" is used here, which is a more polite or less direct way of asking for something. "Could you repeat that, please?"

The second expression is, "I'm not quite sure I understood you correctly. Did you mean...?"

I'm not quite sure I understood you correctly. Did you mean...?

In this case, the interviewee is making sure that he or she understands the question the interviewer just asked. The interviewee might say, "I'm not quite sure I understood you correctly. Did you mean what type of qualifications will I use in this job?"

The interviewer will usually say, "yes" or "no" and then give more explanation. So, the interviewer might say "actually, no, I was asking what kind of skills you might bring you to this position."

Notice how the interviewee first uses the expression, "I'm not quite sure I understood you correctly." The interviewee could have said, "I didn't understand you." But "I'm not quite sure I understood you correctly," is more polite and therefore sounds better.

Let's look at one final expression, "if I understand you correctly, you're asking..."

If I understand you correctly, you're asking...

Again, the interviewee uses a more polite expression rather than saying, "I don't understand you," which could sound too direct to the interviewer.

"If I understand you correctly, you're asking me what kind of skills I will bring to this job." The interviewer might then say, "yes. That's correct."

## Summary

In this video, we have looked at ways of asking an interviewer to repeat or clarify information in a question. These are useful expressions you can use if you don't fully understand what the interviewer is asking you.

## What's next?

Next, we will take a short quiz to check your understanding of appropriate interview questions.

## **QUIZ 1: INTERVIEW JEOPARDY**

**Instructions:** Read each answer to an interview question, then choose the question that was asked.

You can take this quiz as many times as you want, and your highest score will be kept. You must score at least 70% to pass this quiz.

**>>>> Please note that this quiz can only be completed in Canvas. <<<<**

## LESSON 4: SAMPLE INTERVIEWS: DO'S AND DON'TS PART 1



The video for this lesson is available online. Please find the transcript for the lesson below.

Hello, in this and the next and final video in our course, we're going to look at some of the do's and don'ts of an interview. We will look at what are acceptable things to see and hear in an interview in the United States, and what are unacceptable things to see and hear. By the end of these two videos, you should have a clear understanding of what a good interview should look and sound like. Let's get started.

We're going to begin, by looking at the beginning of an interview. This is when the interviewee will first meet the interviewer and perhaps, make some small talk before the actual interview begins. As you watch, ask yourself the question, is this interviewee making a good first impression? Why or why not?

After the scene, we'll come back and discuss your answers.

### Interview 1 Transcript

>> [SOUND].

**Ms. Hernandez:** Come in.

>> [SOUND].

**Ms. Hernandez:** Come in.

**Michael:** Am I in the right place for the job interview?

I hope you agree that this was not the greatest of starts to an interview. First, the interviewee was late. Which is not something you should ever be for an interview. Then he came dressed unprofessionally. Finally, his manner was too informal, and casual, for a professional situation, like, an interview.

Let's try that once again, shall we? Again, ask yourself if this candidate is making a good first impression?

## Interview 2 Transcript

>> [SOUND]

**Ms. Hernandez:** Come in.

**Michael:** Hi, Ms. Hernandez?

**Ms. Hernandez:** Yes, are you Michael Flatley?

**Michael:** That's right, I hope I'm not too early.

**Ms. Hernandez:** Not at all, it's very nice to meet you.

**Michael:** Nice to meet you too.

**Ms. Hernandez:** Did you have any trouble finding the building?

**Michael:** No, not at all, thank you.

**Ms. Hernandez:** Please have a seat and we'll get started.

Much better, I think you'll agree. No lateness, no unprofessional dress, no informal manner, so far so good. I hope you'll agree that this candidate has made a good first impression.

## Summary

In this video, we've looked at the beginning of an interview from the moment you walk in the door to the moment that questions begin.

## What's Next?

In the next video, we'll look at the remainder of the interview and look at some more do's and don'ts.

## LESSON 5: SAMPLE INTERVIEWS: DO'S AND DON'TS PART 2



The video for this lesson is available online. Please find the transcript for the lesson below.

Hi again. In this, the final video of our course, we're going to look at some more do's and don'ts of an interview.

We'll compare what is appropriate and correct with what is not appropriate or correct in an interview in the United States.

When we left our interview in the last video, we saw that the questioning part of the interview was about to begin. The candidate hadn't made a good first impression. He's arrived late, was unprofessionally dressed, and had an informal manner. Let's continue with the interview and see how he does answering the questions. As you watch ask yourself these questions:

1. Does he answer the questions well?
2. When he doesn't understand a question, does he use a clarification question well?
3. Does the interviewee have good questions of his own prepared?

Ready? Back to our interview.

### Interview 1 Transcript

**Ms. Hernandez:** Michael, you just told me about your biggest strength, what would you say is your biggest weakness?

**Michael:** Good question, to be honest, I don't really have any weaknesses.

**Ms. Hernandez:** Okay. Well then, could you tell me why you want to work for this company?

**Michael:** Well, I hadn't really heard of this company until I heard it from a friend of mine who has this ex-girlfriend who used to work here. But I hear the pay is good and the restaurant food is awesome.

**Ms. Hernandez:** Okay. Well, where do you see yourself in three years?

**Michael:** What's that?

**Ms. Hernandez:** In the future, where do you see yourself in three years?

**Michael:** Probably in your job. [LAUGH]

**Ms. Hernandez:** All right then. I've asked you a few questions. Do you have any questions for me?

**Michael:** Yeah, how much vacation time will I get in this job?

**Ms. Hernandez:** Ok, in this position you would normally get two days of vacation per month. So, at the end of the year that would be 24 days.

**Michael:** 24 days? Awesome, when can I start?

**Ms. Hernandez:** We'll get back to you soon.

W, yo

I hope you can agree that this interviewee did most of the things you shouldn't do in an interview. He didn't answer the questions well. He used clarifying questions incorrectly. And he didn't have any good questions prepared for the interviewer. Overall, this was a disaster. I am pretty sure this person will not be getting the job.

Let's now turn to the other candidate. When we last saw him, he had made a good first impression by being on time. Being professionally dressed and having a professional manner. Good job so far. Let's see how he does answering the questions.

## Interview 2 Transcript

**Ms. Hernandez:** Michael, you just told me about your biggest strength, what would you say is your biggest weakness?

**Michael:** That's a good question. Let me think, probably I take criticism a little too personally. But this is something I'm really working on and trying not to let criticism... I see it as being personal... but more of a professional thing. Am I making sense here?

**Ms. Hernandez:** Yes, absolutely. And so, why do you want to work for this company?

**Michael:** Well, I really like the set of products that this company has developed, and I think with my own experience in the set of skills that I've developed that I can really contribute and help this company grow.

**Ms. Hernandez:** Okay. Well, where do you see yourself in three years?

**Michael:** If I'm understanding you correctly, you're asking me where I see myself in three years' time. Is that right?

**Ms. Hernandez:** Yes, that's correct.

**Michael:** Well, probably in the same role or maybe in a more senior position. Maybe growing into a position with more responsibility, maybe managing a team.

**Ms. Hernandez:** All right then. I've asked you a few questions. Do you have any questions for me?

**Michael:** Yeah, sure do. Are there any opportunities for professional development in this position?

**Ms. Hernandez:** Great question. We do have a budget for training and a lot of our employees use that money to take courses. But we also offer in-house professional development a few times a year...

**Michael:** That sounds like a wonderful opportunity. Great, I can't wait to start.

**Ms. Hernandez:** All right, well we have a few more candidates to interview but then we will be getting back to

Pretty impressive responses, I hope you agree. He was well prepared and answered the questions confidently. I hope this candidate gets offered the job or at least gets called for a second interview. What do you think?

## Summary

In this video, we looked at some of the do's and don'ts of an interview. We compared what's appropriate, and what's not appropriate.

## What's Next?

Next, we'll check your understanding with a quiz where you'll match sample answers to questions. And finally, we'll have our last course discussion.

## QUIZ: MATCHING ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

>>>> Please note that this quiz can only be completed in Canvas. <<<<

### Directions:

**Directions:** For each question, choose the matching answer. You can take this quiz as many times as you want, and your highest score will be kept. You must score at least 70% to pass this quiz.

## OPTIONAL DISCUSSION: INTERVIEW QUESTION AND RESPONSE

**Note:** This discussion is optional and will not be graded.

### Directions:

Read an example interview question and write your response to that interview question.

### Interview Question:

**Describe a time when you faced a difficulty and what you did to overcome that challenge.**

### Requirements:

Write 5-8 sentences. In your response, you should:

- answer the question completely and clearly
- use past tense verbs
- give 2-3 examples from your own life/experience

### Model response:

*5 years ago, I worked at a restaurant in New York City. I worked as a server 3 or 4 nights a week while I was going to school during the day. A lot of my coworkers were also students at my school, and we all had similar challenges of managing our time between school and work. To help solve this problem, I created a flexible schedule system for servers, and I presented my idea to the manager. She agreed to try the new system for 1 month. It worked so well that she decided to keep my flexible system.*

### Module 5 Discussion Self-Assessment Rubric

| Criteria  | Meets Expectations                              | Does Not Meet Expectations                         |
|---|---|--|
| <b>Content</b><br>Your response should include a description of a time that you faced a challenge at work.    | I described a challenge at work.                | I did not describe a challenge at work.            |
| <b>Content</b><br>Your response should include a description of what you did to overcome a challenge at work. | I described how I overcome a challenge at work. | I did not describe overcoming a challenge at work. |
| <b>Grammar</b><br>Your response should include past tense verbs.  | I used the past tense.                          | I did not use the past tense.                      |
| <b>Supporting Details</b><br>Your response should include 2-3 examples from your own life/experience          | I gave 2-3 examples from my own life.           | I did not give 2-3 examples from my own life.      |

## MODULE 5: WRAP-UP AND LOOKING AHEAD

### WRAP-UP

#### **Congratulations! You have completed Module 5: Networking**

In this module, you:

- Reviewed different types of questions used in job interviews
- Identified new fundamental vocabulary and practiced using that new vocabulary in course activities
- Answered an interview question briefly and clearly.



You have completed Module 5! Congratulations! To receive your certificate and digital badge, follow the instructions in the “After-the-MOOC Module”.

## Course Conclusion

Hi and welcome to the final video in our course.

As we said in the first video, this course was designed to help you improve your English language skills and your understanding of the job application process. We hope you have learned a lot from the experience and now feel better prepared and more confident finding and applying for jobs you are interested in.

For many of you, your job search will not simply end as soon as this course does. As we mentioned before, many of us change jobs and careers throughout our working lives. On each occasion, we may have to go through the different steps we have discussed in this course. We hope you will learn and grow from each experience.

Please remember the importance of preparing an up-to-date professional looking resume and cover letter. Making a good first impression with an employer is vital. In addition, prepare for the job interview by researching the company and being ready to answer typical interview questions.

We really enjoyed working with you and we wish you all the best in your future studies and careers. Good luck.