

Developing Oral Communication and Questioning Skills – Grade Eight

Ohio Standards Connection

Communication: Oral and Visual

Benchmark B

Analyze the techniques used by speakers and media to influence an audience, and evaluate the effect this has on the credibility of the speaker or media messages.

Indicator 3

Determine the credibility of the speaker (e.g., hidden agendas, slanted or biased material) and recognize fallacies of reasoning used in presentations and media message.

Benchmark D

Demonstrate an effective speaking strategy by selecting appropriate language and adjusting presentation techniques.

Indicator 5

Demonstrate an understanding of the rules of the English language and select language appropriate to the purpose and audience.

Indicator 6

Adjust volume, phrasing, enunciation, voice modulation and inflection to stress important ideas and impact audience response.

Lesson Summary:

Students analyze a professional interview to determine criteria needed to perform a high-quality interview. The students develop questions to conduct their own interviews based on effective speaking strategies.

Estimated Duration: *Approximately eight hours.*

Commentary:

“In addition to observing others conducting interviews, students engage in their own interviews and explore subject matter through this method. This lesson plan has broad connections to social studies and other disciplines. The skills practiced here have wide applications.”

Pre-Assessment:

- Give students a copy of the *Pre-Assessment Five Sentence Brainstorm*, Attachment A.
- Ask students to list five sentences that come to mind when they think of interviewing.
- Once students have five sentences, divide them into groups of two-four to discuss their sentences.
- Each group selects three sentences it feels best explain interviewing and writes them on chart paper so that group members can post and explain their rationale to the entire class.

Scoring Guidelines:

Observe the groups and evaluate their assessments of interviewing. Use observations to determine the content of subsequent lessons.

Post Assessment:

- The rubric should be designed using the criteria generated from class discussions about what makes a good interview.
- As the students perform their interviews, they are graded with the rubric.
- A sample rubric, *Post-Assessment Scoring Criteria* sheet, Attachment H, is attached for reference.

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Reading Process: Concepts of Print, Comprehension Strategies and Self- Monitoring Strategies

Benchmark B

Demonstrate comprehension of print and electronic text by responding to questions (e.g. literal, inferential, evaluative and synthesizing).

Indicator 2

Answer literal, inferential, evaluative and synthesizing questions to demonstrate comprehension of grade-appropriate print text and electronic and visual media.

Scoring Guidelines:

- It works best to establish 10 criteria for each scoring guide.
- Each criterion can be awarded 10 points for a total of 100 points.

Instructional Procedures:

Day One

1. Complete pre-assessment and discuss the results. Post results in room. Discuss how the results may apply to interviewing.
2. Start the lesson by reading a picture book that can be used to introduce students to asking questions. While reading aloud, pause and think out loud, so the students know the questions. It is important for students to see you interacting with the text. (See reference section for suggested works.)
3. After reading, present an apple and an orange to the class. Ask which piece of fruit they like better. Why?
4. Explain that low-level questions deal with recall and specific detail, while high-level questions address analysis, application, synthesis and evaluation. Define each for the group. Use the fruit as a way to help your student's model questioning at differing levels.
5. Give each student a copy of the *Levels of Questioning* handout, Attachment B. Review the different levels of questioning. Have the students put the *Levels of Questioning* handout, Attachment B into folders for later use.

Instructional Tip:

- Prepare for the second step of this lesson by writing the questions from the picture book or questions generated by the teacher ahead of time on self-adhesive notes or chart paper. It is important to point out that the questions you raise while reading the text may or may not be answered by the end of the reading.
- Examples of "fruit" question:
 - 1) Recall specific details: What color is the apple? What shape is the orange? Which one is bigger?
 - 2) Comprehension: Which piece of fruit makes your fingers feel sticky? Which piece of fruit is packed with vitamin C?



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- 3) Analysis: What are three differences/similarities between the apple and the orange?
- 4) Application: Can you think of a way to peel an orange without getting your fingers sticky?
- 5) Synthesis: If you were going to create a new piece of fruit that was a combination of the apple and the orange, what would the fruit look and taste like?
- 6) Evaluation: Which fruit is better for you and why?

Day Two

6. Have students practice their questioning skills using the fruit as a central topic. (See instructional tip above.)
7. Introduce a short poem or picture book. Read the book or poem aloud. While you are reading, have students write questions about the text on self-adhesive notes. Use one note per question. Have them label each with the category where they feel it will fit on the chart.
8. Put the students into groups of four to discuss the questions they wrote during your reading. Direct each group to decide its best question for each questioning category.
9. On the board, list the six question categories and ask one student from each group to place the group's notes under its appropriate category. This is known as an affinity diagram. Determine if the questions were appropriately placed.

Homework Options and Home Connections:

Ask students to record the questions heard at home or on a television program. Allow a 30-minute observation time. In that time period, record all the questions heard. Students should label each question as high-level or low-level question using the *Qualifying Questions Homework Sheet*, (Attachment C). If appropriate, students may wish to complete this activity in another class. Make the faculty aware of your assignment.

Differentiated Instructional Support:

Students, who have trouble listening to a story read orally and write questions without the written text, can be given copies of the text or the story can be shown on an overhead.

Instructional Tip:

If you do not have access to television or a video cassette recorder, you could have the students or student and teacher role play good to bad interview techniques.

Day Three

10. Discuss the question-analysis homework. Tally the numbers of each type and discuss the results.
11. Show a video taped interview by a professional interviewer. (Show only 10 to 15 minutes of the interview.)
12. Students watch the video and complete *Good Interview Characteristics*, Attachment D.
13. In groups of four, have students share the characteristics they observed on the video. Each group should make a master list of all observed characteristics.



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14. Collect each group's list so that a master list can be made. Post the master list of interviewer characteristics on the wall as a reference and distribute a copy to each student during the next class session.

Instructional Tip:

The master list also can be used to design a rubric to evaluate the students during their interviews. *Post-Assessment Scoring Criteria*, Attachment H, has an example of scoring criteria.

15. Show a 10-minute video clip from a bad interview. Have students complete *Bad Interview Characteristics*, Attachment E. Follow same procedure as before.

Homework Options and Home Connections:

Give students a copy of a short story to read independently. Each student selects a main character to interview and write one question from each of the six levels of questioning. (See Attachment F, *Writing Leveled Questions*.)

Differentiated Instructional Support:

If the short story is difficult for students to read independently, provide an audio version or a simpler alternative text.

Day Four

16. After reading the story and developing questions, divide students into interview pairs. Allow time for students to share their questions with their partners.
17. Move back to pre-assessment groups; compare the good and bad characteristics of the video with their initial brainstorm comments from the pre-assessment. Tell how they are the same and different. A Venn Diagram or other graphic organizer could be used.
18. Each pair decides which single question for each category to use during its interview.
19. Review the *Post-Assessment Scoring Criteria* so students understand their responsibilities in this process. Each partner decides which role he or she will fill, determines the answers to each question and practices the now-scripted interview.

Day Five

20. Show a video clip of an interview using follow-up questions.
21. Discuss methods the interviewer used to develop follow-up questions using a word or topic from the subject's previous answer.
22. Use a transcript of an interview to focus students' follow-up questions

Instructional Tip:

Transcript of Interview, Attachment G, could be used for this activity. This works well as a whole-class or small-group activity after students have been introduced to the characteristics of a good interview.



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23. Distribute the transcripts. Two students, one as subject and one as interviewer, read the interview aloud. As others watch, instruct students to write two possible follow-up questions that could have been asked.
24. Have students work in small groups to discuss follow-up questions. Focus discussion on the rationale behind each follow-up question.
25. After this discussion, students return to their pairs and develop two follow-up questions for their character interviews.

Day Six

26. Students practice their interview questions using the inside/outside circle technique. Students should follow good interviewing techniques.

Instructional Tips:

- Discourage students from writing the full question if they elect to use note cards.
- **Inside/Outside Circle**
Students form two concentric circles. Both circles have the same number of students so that each student is facing another student. The outside circle should have all the interviewers. The students interview their partners. Then, both circles rotate so that students are paired with new partners. The outside circle students interview the new partners. All the students have read the same text, so acting as the interview subject should not be a problem.

Steps:

1. Students form circles;
2. Pair conducts interview;
3. Reverse roles;
4. Students rotate.

If the weather is nice, this is fun to do outside. Consider varying the number of positions rotated and occasionally switch directions.

Days Seven and Eight

27. Each pair conducts its interview. Videotape the interviews so the students may self-evaluate their performances. Use scoring criteria similar to those found in the *Post-Assessment Scoring Criteria*, Attachment H.

Differentiated Instructional Support:

Instruction is differentiated according to learner needs to help all learners either meet the intent of the specified indicators(s) or, if the indicator is already met, to advance beyond the specified indicators(s).

Write the interview questions on chart paper and hang them up behind the interviewee. This way the interviewer can make eye contact and look at the questions at the same time.

28. Distribute copies of the *Self-Assessment*, Attachment I.
29. As the students watch themselves on the videotape, be sure they identify both positive and negative characteristics of their interviews.



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30. Choose one of the 10 questions students will use to write a journal entry that allows them to provide feedback about their interviews.

Extension:

Once the students have learned and practiced the technique of interviewing, they could interview other classmates, family members or community members for other classroom projects.

Interdisciplinary Connections:

Social Studies

The students could work on an oral history project which focuses on interviewing another person. Oral histories are created when one person (the interviewer) interviews another person (the subject) about a specific time period in the subject's life or a specific topic the subject can recall. The interviewer takes the subject's responses and creates a text of the subject's words told through his/her view. This is not an exact transcript of what the subject says. The interviewer must edit the transcript-- moving parts around, taking parts out, and even adding words here and there (with the subject's permission). The final piece of writing should capture the voice and spirit of the subject. (The Social Studies Standards include oral histories in seventh grade, but the following benchmark applies as well.)

Social Studies Skills and Methods Standard

Benchmark: C. Present a position and support it with evidence and citation of sources.

Indicator: 2. Construct an historical narrative using primary and secondary sources.

Materials and Resources:

The inclusion of a specific resource in any lesson formulated by the Ohio Department of Education should not be interpreted as an endorsement of that particular resource, or any of its contents, by the Ohio Department of Education. The Ohio Department of Education does not endorse any particular resource. The Web addresses listed are for a given site's main page, therefore, it may be necessary to search within that site to find the specific information required for a given lesson. Please note that information published on the Internet changes over time, therefore the links provided may no longer contain the specific information related to a given lesson. Teachers are advised to preview all sites before using them with students.

Day One

For the teacher: picture book that can be used to introduce students to asking questions, an apple and an orange, chart paper, markers, self-adhesive notes

For the students: copy of the short story that would lend itself to interviewing a character, a copy of *Levels of Questioning*, Attachment B

Day Two

For the teacher: copy of a picture book or fairy tale that will help the students practice their questioning skills, self-adhesive notes, *Analyzing Questions Homework*, Attachment C



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Day Three

For the teacher: two videos (one that shows good interview techniques and one that shows bad interview techniques), chart paper, markers or chalk board, *Good and Bad Interview Characteristics*, Attachments D and E

For the students: copy of a short story. (See reference section for suggested works.)

Day Four

No new materials required

Day Five

For the teacher: video of an interviewer using follow-up questions

For the student: Attachment G, *Transcript of an Interview*

Day Six

No new materials required

Days Seven and Eight

For the teacher: Attachment H, *Post-Assessment Scoring Criteria*

Day Nine and 10

For the teacher: Attachment I, *Interview Self-Assessment Sheet*

Vocabulary:

- analysis
- application
- comprehension
- evaluation
- recall
- synthesis

Technology Connections:

- Students can use the Internet to complete their oral history projects
- Students can use a word processor to type their interview questions
- Video
- Video documentary of the interviewing process
- Web site of oral history projects

Research Connections:

Zemelman, Steven, Harvey Daniels and Arthur Hyde. *Best Practice: New Standards of Teaching and Learning in America's Schools*. Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann, 1998.

- Representing-to-learn

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Drawing, sketching, jotting, mapping and other graphic representations are valuable and can be called representing to learn. A reading workshop of this variety, as developed by Nancie Atwell (1998), yields busy groups of students, engaged in their own reading tasks, responding and enhancing their comprehension.

- Classroom workshop
Students use large scheduled periods of time for doing their own reading and writing. They collaborate freely with classmates; keep their own records and self-evaluation. Teachers take new roles as model and facilitator and teach to the teachable moments every day (Ruth Hubbard 1996, Elinor Ross, 1996).
- Authentic experiences
Involve students in tangible, authentic, real-world materials and experiences. Favor learn-by-doing over learn-by-sitting-quietly. Use primary source materials. Invite speakers from the community, including parents. Mix children in multi-age grouping.
[From the work of Bert Horwood (1995), Richard J. Kraft and James Kiesmeier (1994).]

Cawletti, Gordon. *Handbook of Research on Improving Student Achievement*. Arlington, Va: Educational Research Service, 1999.

- Teach students multiple-learning strategies that promote metacognition by providing modeled, guided practice and application.
- Incorporate cooperative learning.
- Foster interactive learning.
- Extend students' background knowledge.
- Use meaning-making skills and strategies such as summarizing, questioning and interpreting.
- Teach critical reading/writing skills
- Emphasize discussion and analysis.
- Stress the composing process.
- Provide balanced attention to different forms of reading, writing and speaking.
- Provide early intervention.
- Expose students to varied kinds of literature.
- Provide assessment that reflects the content and process of instruction.

Pressley, Michael. *Reading Instruction that Works: The Case for Balanced Reading*. New York: Guilford Press, 1998.

Cognitive strategies such as thinking aloud, constructing images, summarizing, predicting, activating prior knowledge, questioning, clarifying and analyzing text structure can promote reading instruction beginning in grade two and continuing into high school. These are comprehension strategies used by excellent readers.

Sousa, David A. *How the Brain Learns: A Classroom Teacher's Guide*. Reston, Va.: NASSP, 1995.

Sousa's invaluable guide includes much more than the list below, but for our purposes, this list summarizes the lesson components he suggests using:



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Attachments:

Attachment A, *Pre-Assessment Five Sentence Brainstorm*

Attachment B, *Levels of Questioning*

Attachment C, *Analyzing Questions Homework*

Attachment D, *Good Interview Characteristics*

Attachment E, *Bad Interview Characteristics*

Attachment F, *Writing Leveled Questions*

Attachment G, *Transcript of Interview*

Attachment H, *Post-Assessment Scoring Criteria*

Attachment I, *Self-Assessment*



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Attachment A Pre-Assessment Five-Sentence Brainstorm

Write five sentences that tell what you know about conducting an interview.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Write the three sentences your group feels best explain interviewing.

1.

2.

3.

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Attachment B Levels of Questioning

Knowledge:

Exhibits memory of previously-learned material by recalling facts, terms, basic concepts and answers.

Key Words:

who	what	why	when	omit
choose	find	how	define	label
list	match	name	relate	tell
where	show	recall	which	spell
select	locate	draw	group	underline

Questions:

What is...?	How is...?
Where is...?	When did _____ happen?
How did _____ happen...?	How would you explain...?
Why did...?	How would you describe...?
When did...?	Can you recall...?
How would you show...?	Can you select...?
Who were the main...?	Can you list the three...?
Which one...?	Who was...?
How does...?	Why do...?
Point to the...	Where did...?
What was...?	How many...?
Locate in the story where it....	

Comprehension:

Demonstrate the understanding of facts and ideas by organizing, comparing, translating, interpreting, giving descriptions and stating main ideas.

Key Words:

compare	illustrate	summarize	explain	extend
translate	interpret	relate	rephrase	infer
demonstrate	outline	classify	contrast	show
change	describe	predict	give examples	put in order

Questions:

How would you classify the type of...?	What is the main idea of...?
How would you compare...? Contrast...?	Which statements support...?
What facts or ideas show...?	Tell in your own words....
How would you rephrase the meaning...?	What can you say about...?
Which is the best answer...?	How would you summarize...?
Tell why...	Give me an example of....

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Attachment B (Continued) Levels of Questioning

Summarize....
In your own words, tell how...?
Illustrate the part of the story that.....
Describe what
Will you state or interpret in your own words...?
Can you explain what is happening...? What is meant...?

What does _____ mean?
Make a map of....

Application:

Solve problems to new situations by applying acquired knowledge, facts, techniques and rules in a different way.

Key Words:

apply	build	choose	construct	relate
develop	interview	make use of	organize	plan
experiment with	select	solve	illustrate	predict
utilize	model	identify	classify	graph

Questions:

What facts would you select to show...?	What examples can you find to...?
How would you organize _____ to show...?	What would result if...?
What approach would you use to...?	Discuss two new ways...
What other ways would you plan to...?	Demonstrate the use of a....
Can you make use of the facts to...?	How would you use...?
What elements would you choose to change...?	If you were there would you....?
What would happen to you if...?	Would you have done the same as...?
How would you show your understanding of...?	
How would you apply what you learned to develop...?	
How would you solve this problem in your own life?	
What questions would you ask in an interview with...?	
How would you solve _____ using what you have learned?	

Analysis:

Examine and break information into parts by identifying motives or causes. Make inferences and find evidence to support generalizations.

Key Words:

analyze	relationships	test for	examine	select
compare	inference	distinction	survey	sort
dissect	categorize	function	distinguish	summarize
inspect	contrast	assumption	theme	list

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Attachment B (Continued) Levels of Questioning

take part in divide classify motive simplify
discover draw conclusion

Questions:

What are the parts or features of...?	What is the function of...?
How is _____ related to...?	What ideas justify...?
What things are similar/different...?	How would you categorize...?
What is the relationship between...?	What evidence can you find...?
What motive is there...?	Explain why....
Can you make a distinction between...?	Compare....
What inference can you make...?	Distinguish among....
What conclusions can you draw...?	What kind of person is...?
What things would you have used to...?	How would you classify...?
Can you identify the different parts...?	Why do you think...?
What caused _____ to act the way _____ did?	What is the theme...?
What things couldn't have happened in real life?	Can you list the parts...?
What part of the story was most exciting, scary...?	

Synthesis:

Compile information together in a different way by combining elements in a new pattern or proposing alternative solutions.

Key Words:

build	minimize	solution	imagine	original
compare	theorize	modify	originate	predict
create	improve	improve	propose	develop
estimate	choose	maximize	suppose	change
invent	compose	elaborate	change	test
plan	design	happen	adapt	make up
solve	formulate	combine	delete	discuss
construct				

Questions:

How could you change (modify) the plot (plan)...?	How would you improve...?
Can you elaborate on the reason...?	What would happen if...?
Can you propose an alternative...?	Can you invent...?
What can be done to minimize (maximize)...?	What way would you design...?
What can be combined to improve (change)...?	How would you test...?
Can you formulate a theory for...?	Can you predict the outcome if...?
How would you estimate the results for...?	What facts can you compile...?
Can you think of an original way for the...?	What would it be like if...?

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Attachment B (Continued) Levels of Questioning

Pretend you are a _____ how would you...? Tell a different ending...
 Suppose you could _____ what would you do...?
 What changes would you make...?
 How would you adapt _____ to create a different...?
 Can you construct a model that would change...?
 Add something new to the story that is not already there.

Evaluation:

Present and defend opinions by making judgments about information, validity of ideas or quality of work based on a set of criteria.

Key Words:

award	influence	importance	prioritize
criticize	estimate	disprove	explain
determine	choose	perceive	criteria
judge	decide	influence	assess
compare	dispute	conclude	value
recommend	justify	defend	deduct
agree	mark	evaluate	prove
opinion	rule on	measure	interpret
support	appraise	rate	select

Questions:

What is your opinion of...?	How would you prove? Disprove...?
Can you assess the value or importance of...?	Would it be better if...?
Why did he/she (the character) choose...?	What would you recommend...?
What would you cite to defend the actions...?	How would you rate the...?
How would you evaluate...?	How could you determine...?
What choice would you have made...?	What would you select...?
What judgment would you make about...?	How would you prioritize...?
What data was used to make the conclusion...?	How would you justify...?
Why was it better that...?	How would you prioritize the facts...?
Did you like the story? Why?	What do you think will happen to...?
Select the best... Why is it the best?	Why do you think that?
Was _____ good or bad? Why?	Did you like the story? Why?
How would you compare the ideas...? People...?	Could this really have happened?
Based on what you know, how would you explain...?	
Do you agree with the actions...? With the outcomes...?	
What information would you use to support the view...?	
Which person in the story would you most like to meet? Why or why not?	
List five important facts. Rank these from the most important to the least important.	



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Attachment D Good Interview Characteristics

What makes a good interview?

List observed characteristics of a good interviewer.

List observed characteristics of a good interviewee.



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Attachment E Bad Interview Characteristics

What makes a bad interview?

List observed characteristics of a bad interviewer.

List observed characteristics of a bad interviewee.



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Attachment F Writing Leveled Questions

Directions: Using the *Levels of Questioning* sheet, write questions for each of the following areas.

Level I – Knowledge

Level II – Comprehension

Level III – Application

Level IV – Analysis

Level V – Synthesis

Level VI – Evaluation

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Attachment G

On October 16, 2000, classrooms across America went online to ask J.K. Rowling their burning questions about Harry Potter. Below is the transcript for that interview.

Write two follow-up questions to an answer given by J.K. Rowling.

Q The wand chooses the wizard, of course, but what magical creature would you select for your own wand?

J.K. *I'd like a phoenix feather; which is why I gave it to Harry!*

Q What shape would a Boggart take if it wanted to scare you? How would you defeat it?

J.K. *I think I'd probably have Aragog, as Ron did. I hate spiders.*

Q I know you have had children throughout the world tell you how Harry has changed their life, but is there any one story a child has told you that really stands out in your mind?

J.K. *My favourite was the girl who came to the Edinburgh book Festival to see me. When she reached the signing table she said, "I didn't want so many people to be here—this is MY book." That really resonated with me, because that's how I felt about my own favourite books.*

Q Is Voldemort some sort of relative of Harry's? Possibly his mother's brother?

J.K. *I'm laughing...that would be a bit Star Wars, wouldn't it?*

Q In your first book, there is a secret message on the Mirror of Erised. Are there any other secret messages throughout the book that we should be watching for?

J.K. *Not secret messages of that type, but if you read carefully, you'll get hints about what's coming. And that's all I'm saying!*

Q My impression is that the Harry books are getting "darker" somehow. Is this because he is growing up, and his readers have to do the same?

J.K. *It's really because Voldemort is getting more powerful, but yes, also because Harry is fourteen now. At fourteen, you really do start realizing that the world is not a safe and protected place—or not always.*

Q Can you give an example of a surprise in your writing process, such as a character you weren't expecting?

J.K. *Yes, it was a big surprise to me that Mad Eye Moody turned out the way he did. I really like him. I didn't expect to.*



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Attachment H Post-Assessment Scoring Criteria

Name _____

Interviewer

Eye contact (10 points)	_____
Speaks loudly, clearly and slowly (10 points)	_____
Keeps conversation moving (10 points)	_____
Introduces the subject (10 points)	_____
Listens to the whole answer (10 points)	_____
Practices and is familiar with the questions (10 points)	_____
Asks two follow-up questions (10 points)	_____
Restates the question as needed by the subject (10 points)	_____
Meets time requirement (10 points)	_____
Questions asked reflect higher-level thinking (10 points)	_____
Total	_____/100

Name _____

Subject

Eye Contact (10 points)	_____
Speaks loudly, clearly and slowly (10 points)	_____
Answers questions completely but does not ramble on (10 points)	_____
Uses good grammar and language consistent with audience (10 points)	_____
Listens to the whole question before responding (10 points)	_____
Has an answer for questions (10 points)	_____
Friendly (10 points)	_____
Asks for the question to be restated (10 points)	_____
Meets time requirement (10 points)	_____
Uses details from the story when answering the questions (10 points)	_____
Total	_____/100



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Attachment I

Self-Assessment

Name _____

Two good characteristics I displayed during my interview.

-
-

Two characteristics I need to improve for my next interview.

-
-

Write a paragraph about one of the following:

1. What did you learn about your topic from this presentation that you probably would not have learned from a newspaper or textbook?
2. Describe how you felt while conducting your interview.
3. Write about something that another interview said or did that stood out for you.
4. Write three questions that you would have asked an interviewer if you had been the teacher. Make sure you tell who you would have asked these questions and why.
5. Write a list of suggestions to an interviewer on how to improve his/her interview techniques.
6. Describe what was the hardest part for you during your interview.
7. What questions do you have about conducting an interview?
8. What was something used in one of the interviews that you would like to use in yours? Why?
9. If you were going to conduct another interview, what would you do differently?
10. If you feel that you had the best interview, tell what you did well and why it worked for this interview situation.