

Elementary Teacher Interview Guide

Step-by-step guide for teacher job applicants

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Job of an elementary teacher is one of the most rewarding and challenging roles. A personal mission, a calling, a dream many of us follow. **Not every dream comes true, however...** Study conducted in the United States back in March 2016 showed that in average, **more than ten people with qualification applied for every single teacher job opening**, during the year of 2015.

How to be the one of ten who gets the job? How to turn your dream to reality? I will try to answer this question on the pages of Elementary Teacher Interview Guide.

Screening and hiring elementary teachers differs to most interviews. You need to prepare not only for the questions, but also **for the hiring committee**, since personal preferences often play a role, and it doesn't matter if the interview is led by a principal, assistant principal, internal HR committee, or specialized education recruitment agency, such as Meridian. However, I personally interviewed more than four hundred applicants for various teaching jobs, and therefore I know:

- That most people **focus on completely wrong things in their interview preparation.**
- That practically everyone can get this job, if they know what to do, and HOW to do it in an interview.
- The questions the interviewers typically use, how to answer them to their satisfaction, and what else one can do to **maximize their chances of getting a job.**

This eBook should help you to understand what to do from the very beginning of your job search, to the moment of signing a coveted job contract at the school of your choice.

You can ask me right now:

Doesn't the teacher recruitment differ from school to school, from state to state, from country to country?

Certainly, some differences do exist. However, when you are interviewed for a job of a teacher, you can hardly expect to deal with interview questions for nurses, or competency test for nuclear scientists.

The principles of hiring, and the interview questions, are similar, every time an educational institution recruits for the position of an elementary teacher. Once you understand these principles and questions, and learn how to adapt to the specific conditions of your interview, you will be ready to make a **long-lasting unforgettable impression**, and get that job.

Enjoy your reading!



Glen Hughins,

Interviewer at Meridian Recruitment; Specialized Career Coach

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I. Before The Interview

Chance favors the prepared mind.

Success in an interview does not depend only on your answers to interview questions. Your **non-verbal communication** matters, your **demeanor** counts. **What you wear and what you bring** with you is also important. Small details make a big difference in this world, and job interview is no different. After all, your success story starts in a moment of composing your resume, and it does continue with many other things you should take care of in the process of hiring. We will have a look at it in the first part of this book.

Teacher Resume

It does not matter if you were already invited for an interview, or are just trying to secure an invitation. You should understand the crucial parts on your resume, and improve them, **because various people read your resume before, during, and after the interview with you**, while trying to make a final decision.

Picture on resume

According to statistics collected in our recruitment agency over the years, candidates with picture on their resume are invited for an interview three times more often than candidates that decided to not use a picture.

One could say it is a coincidence, but I doubt it. Statistics based on hundreds of recruitment projects shouldn't be considered coincidental...

People are **visual beings**. A good picture can tell a lot about your personality, and motivation to do the job of a teacher. In fact, it sometimes tells more than the entire resume.

Therefore, you should definitely choose a good picture, and place it on your resume, ideally in a top right corner. Dressed in business-casual attire, with smile on your face, **showing positive emotions and enthusiasm** would be a great choice of a picture. Alternatively, you can use a **photo of you, teaching in a class**, if you have one. This picture would send a clear sign to the minds of the hiring committee. They would feel that you're qualified to do the job,

simply because they see you doing it already. Remember, our decisions are emotional, not rational—and the people in the hiring committee are no different! A great photo can do miracles for an average resume, and can lead to plethora of interview invitations...

Introduction and Resume Objective

Jeremy Miles, a former reputable career coach from Canada, wrote that **one decides in the first eight seconds of reading your resume, whether they invite you for an interview.** They may, as well as not, read your resume through, but the decision has already been taken in their head, in the first eight seconds.

For this reason, **the picture and the first few lines on your resume represent the most crucial part, and you need to pay close attention to them.**

Your objective, or introduction (first few sentences on your resume) **should be short, to the point, and somehow unique.** Inspire yourself with the following examples:

- *Energetic and goal-oriented elementary school teacher seeking work in the similar capacity. Well versed in developing a constructive classroom environment to facilitate the learning of pupils with a broader aim of bringing progressive innovation in elementary teaching.*
- *Dedicated elementary teacher eager to teach well, with a passion for education and an unwavering commitment to optimizing student and school success.*
- *I am looking for elementary teacher position to use full potential of my skills, creativity, motivation and experience, to make some positive difference in an educational institution, and in daily life of every single pupil in my class.*

Note: As you could see, clever job applicants **do not write only about their personal goals** on the objective. In each of their objectives, you can find **something positive for the school also**, for example *optimizing school success, bringing innovation to school, making a positive difference*. That is a school-oriented approach, a broader perspective an applicant shows on their resume. And, not surprisingly, school administrators seek teachers with this

perspective—people who care for the school and students as well, not only for their own life and dreams...

Other Sections on Elementary Teacher Resume

Other sections on your resume, such as education and working experience, are pretty straightforward. However, you should not forget that anyone can read the paper. It can be a professional in education, as well as someone with no idea about the job of a teacher. Therefore, I suggest you to use mostly simple formulations, and to mention **also your achievements and working duties**, not only the job titles you held in the past (if you held any).

Keep it clear, and simple. Choose good picture; start with an excellent objective, get their attention! Follow it with a decent list of experience, stressing **what you have learned, and achieved on your way**. Your resume should not exceed two pages in length.

I suggest you to improve **your resume**, even if you were already invited for the next interview. Many people will see the copy of it again and again, in the process of decision making. Some of these people may never talk to you—all they will see is your resume, and the report from the hiring committee. Yet they may have their word on the final decision. Therefore it is important to bring few copies of your new, better resume, to the interview with you.

Issue of Correspondence

Your resume has its own “non-verbal communication”. Let me explain it on two examples. One job applicant sent his CV to our agency, claiming to be a very detail oriented teacher. Yet he did not include dates on employment history. He included years only (e.g. XY Position, from 2004 to 2006).

Another young man wrote on his elementary teacher resume that he had excellent computer skills. At the same time, however, his resume was poorly formatted, and he did not even know how to align the picture to the page properly.

In both cases, **words written on a resume did not correspond with the layout and format of it.** Said in other words, verbal and non-verbal communication of their resume did not correspond. As you can guess, the trustworthiness of these applicants was doubted, and we did not invite them for an interview.

Please, have a look at your resume, and think about the issue of correspondence. Every good recruiter checks it (and some average recruiters do so as well). It is always better to **write less, leaving some opportunity for positive surprises in an interview**, than to describe yourself as a superb candidate, but disappoint the interviewing panel on a big day.

Diplomas, Certifications and Recommendations

Master's degree has never made a good teacher of anyone. It is the same with every single role in human society, isn't it? However, for recruiters and school principals, diplomas, degrees, and certifications matter.

Therefore you should definitely make at least **several copies of the documents, and bring them all to the interview with you.**

Even if they did not take the documents from you, or did not look at them at all, it would still help you. The fact that you brought them with you **shows how important the particular job is for you.** It shows the interviewers that you really care. Most job applicants bring only their resume. **Try to be better, try to do more.** Interviewers will always appreciate the “do more” approach.

The same applies to **personal recommendations. If you can get a written recommendation from your former principal (or boss, or professor at school), bring it to the interview.**

The school representatives will make their own background checks anyway, so why not to help them to choose the right person to contact, seeking feedback on your skills?

A signed recommendation from someone they'd respect (*e.g. principal working at another educational institution*) can boost your chances of getting a teaching job. Try to get it, if you

still have time. And if your interview is tomorrow, get the recommendations later. You will find it handy one day.

Personality Tests

Interviewers use various tests while trying to assess the capacities of job applicants for various academic and educational positions. For a job of an elementary teacher, however, they typically use only particular personality test. Interviewers may rarely use an IQ test (especially in agencies), but **for a good teacher, emotional intelligence is more important** than their IQ (anything above 105 is OK for a teacher, if they do not teach nuclear physics).

Without any doubt, however, one needs right personality to be able to teach, and to do it for a long time, without bringing out. Not everyone can handle **the ever-changing and challenging environment of a classroom**. For this reason, hiring committees and HR agencies will quite often ask you to complete a personality test.

Many job seekers are afraid of personality tests. However, once you **understand the logic behind the questions, and know how to approach the test**, it will become your favorite part of an interview.

And even if you don't need to deal with it in your next teaching interview, you will surely remember the lesson one day you encounter a similar test, in another hiring process, perhaps for a role of a school principal 😊.

Form of a test

The most common personality tests consist of thirty to fifty **statements you should give your opinion to**. You should *strongly agree* with a statement, *agree with it*, *disagree with it* or *strongly disagree with it*.

Let me pick five random statements from a personality test for teachers that we use in our recruitment agency.

- *It is easy for you to feel what others are feeling.*
- *When your friends need help, they call you first.*
- *It is hard to really care about work when the job is boring.*
- *You are proud of the work you do.*
- *There are some people you really can't stand.*

These are five statements from a fifty statements-long test that we use in our agency. Job applicants should choose if they *strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed, or strongly disagreed* with every statement.

To make a right choice, you should always ask yourself the following question: **What would an ideal teacher do?**

Would an ideal teacher agree or disagree with the statement? That should be on your mind while completing the test. Let's analyze it one by one.

1. It is easy for you to feel what others are feeling.

A great teacher **is empathic**. They recognize the feelings of the students, and parents, and they act accordingly. So, from a point of view of the interviewers, the answer "*strongly agree*" is the correct one.

2. When your friends need help, they call you first.

You should use the same logic. An ideal applicant for a job of a teacher **does not hesitate to help the others (pupils, colleagues, parents)**, and they are able to solve the problems. Therefore, the right answer is "*strongly agree*".

3. It is hard to really care about work when the job is boring.

The job of a teacher is sometimes boring, just like every other position in education. It is not a repetitive job, but there are periods of routine work. However, **ideal employee should really care about work, even if the job is boring**. So, next to this statement, you should tick "*strongly disagree*", because every great teacher would make that choice.

4. *You are proud of the work you do.*

Ideal employee (and a good too) **should be proud of their work**. When one is proud, they are **happy and motivated** to work hard, day in day out. Schools want to employ people that are happy, and motivated. Logically, the right answer is “*strongly agree*”.

5. *There are some people you really can't stand.*

Every classroom is a mixture of personalities, identities, and intellects. One needs to teach clever, but also not so clever students, deal with good, as well as bad one, with people who love to make problems. And we do not talk about parents yet! As a good candidate for this role, however, **you should be able to stand everyone; you should actually enjoy the diversity your career offers**. Therefore the right answer is “*strongly disagree*”. You should strongly disagree with the statement, because a good teacher can work with everyone.

As you can see, it is easy to complete the test. All you have to do is to ask yourself the following question:

- ***What would a good teacher answer?***

And then you should choose the same option.

*Note: I always chose **strongly agree** or **strongly disagree** for my answers. To only agree or only disagree with something shows hesitation. You should not hesitate. You should have clear vision of your job and life, and know what you want. That is why you should choose “strongly agree” or “strongly disagree” in the vast majority of cases. However, if you are not sure about an answer, you can choose the “mild option”, ticking that you just agree or disagree with a statement.*

Here are five other statements from the test. Would you agree, or disagree with them?

1. *You have confidence in yourself.*
2. *You like to be in the middle of a big crowd.*
3. *There's no use having close friends; they always let you down.*
4. *You always try not to hurt people's feelings.*
5. *You'd rather not compete very much.*

(Right answers: 1. SA, 2. SA, 3. SD, 4. SA, 5. SA)

Do not be afraid of a personality test. You should have enough time to think about the right answers, from a position of a great teacher. In general, great teachers are positive about themselves and the others, they look for the best in everyone. They like to talk to all kinds of people, are motivated and upbeat, and team players. They like to be active and try to do new things all time. They strive to bring value to school and to each classroom every day.

Note: The same technique can be applied on every other “normal” personality testing. However, if you have to deal with strange tests, e.g. test consisting of questions such as “which of these circles is angry”, or “which of these colors is the most blue”, there is not much you can do to prepare for the test in advance. Just follow your heart, and choose an answer...

The good news is that schools and recruitment agencies are ceasing to use weird forms of personality testing. After all, the interpretation of the results was always questionable. If there is a test in your interview, it will be most likely the one with agree-disagree options described in the paragraphs above. Get ready according to the instructions, and **impress the interviewers with your answers.**

Interview Attire

In an ideal world, personal preferences, physical appearance, and attire of job applicants, would have no effect on the final decision of the interviewing panel.

But **we do not live in an ideal world.** Personal preferences, as well as your physical appearance, can make a difference.

While it is naive to believe that good attire (or physical beauty) can win you a teaching job contract, **it is also foolish to think that wrongly chosen attire can not ruin your chances of succeeding.**

So, what to wear?

From my experience, business casual outfit is a best choice for school interviews. Wear the same things you would wear on the first day of school. But the advice does not end here!

Subconscious game

A scientific study proved that once job seekers adhered to the dress code of the institution, the interviewers had better feelings about them. Once again, **it isn't rational, but emotional, and subconscious thing.** Recruiters saw someone as a good adept to join the company, **just because the colors and style of their dress matched with the dress code of the institution, with their corporate identity.**

Schools do not belong to the commercial sector, at least in most countries they do not, but nevertheless they have many things in common with business institutions from the commercial world.

In a world of business, every company has their identity. Colors belong to the identity. You can name it. IBM has the blue, Target red, and STARBUCKS their beautiful green. We can continue for hours... But many schools have their characteristic colors as well!

Clever job seekers choose the color of their attire (tie, shirt, blouse, t-shirt) according to the colors, in order to **send some positive signals to the minds of the interviewers.**

Try to not downplay the importance of your attire. Show them that you are a detail oriented teacher. Show them that **you care about every little thing, because getting the job matters to you.** The final decision of the interviewers is from 80% emotional, not rational. Don't forget on this fact, and always **focus on creating the right impression and atmosphere in the meetings with the hiring committee.**

Do Not Forget to Do Your Homework

Responsible job seekers do some research prior to their interview.

You should already know that people sitting in hiring committees are typically very proud of their institution, or of their school district, and they know a lot about it. They expect the same

from the best job applicant, at least in their eyes it is one of the characteristic of such an applicant—that he or she should devote time to learn something about the school, prior to the interview.

I suggest you to conduct a detailed research, focusing mainly on the following areas:

- The vision and goals of the educational institution
- School principal, and their career
- Major achievements of the institution
- Things that make the school a unique place to study, and to teach at, simply the reasons why students (and teachers) should prefer the school to other, competing institutions
- Problems and challenges they face
- History of the institution
- The most notable achievements of the students (and teachers) in recent years
- Study programs they offer, with all details

You can learn a lot about these things on their website. However, you should not end your research on the website. I suggest you to type the name of school to Google (or Yahoo), opt to show just the latest results (Search tools => Time => Past month) and read what the results offer. **You should do the same thing with the name of principal.** Read everything, make notes, print it, and get ready. Social media profiles of the leading figures can also tell a lot about the people you'll meet in the interview...

Good research will help you in many ways. It will help you **to find good answers to some particular interview questions** (that relate to the educational institution of your choice), to **calm down before your interview** (since it is always easier if we feel familiar with the place and the people), and to **come up with a good question**, once there's an opportunity, or an obligation, to ask something. When you know a lot about their school, you will always find something to start a discussion about.

Everyone loves when people are interested in them, in a good way. **Be interested in them, and they will be interested in you—in hiring you.** Interview can be a simple game, once you understand the basic desires and needs we people have...

On the other hand, ignorant candidates who rely only on their qualifications, and do not even look at the website of the school prior to their interview, are never hired.

***Note:** Before you progress to reading the second part of Elementary Teacher Interview Guide, I would like to stress one thing: You can learn a lot from this book. You can learn the winning interview strategies and brilliant answers to interview questions. We offer you a detailed look into the minds of the recruiters and interviewers, information you won't find in any other publication of this kind.*

*However, **this guide is practical, and your work does not end with reading.** You should improve your resume, do some additional research, and prepare things before your interview. Reading is not enough. **The key is to take action according to the suggestions from the guide.***

Enough of talking, let's progress to the second part!

II. In an Interview

There are a few more things you should know, before you start answering the interview questions. I talk mostly about some interview strategies and techniques, about a certain scope that encompasses the way you approach your interview, and everything that happens there. We will have a look at them in this part of Elementary Teacher Interview Guide.

1. Act, as an ideal elementary teacher would act in their daily job.

Following this single advice will win you many job interviews in your life, not only at schools!

Most job seekers believe that their answers to interview questions decide about success or failure. But this is just partially true... If you asked HR managers about **the real decisive factors in an interview**, they would tell you exactly the same thing I am going to tell you right now:

Your presence, non-verbal communication, your overall demeanor, they are even more important than your answers to interview questions. Success is about presenting yourself as a great candidate for the job, with everything that belongs to such a candidate.

Let's have a closer look at the ideal personality of an elementary teacher.

An ideal candidate for this job sees teaching as their personal mission, their calling to follow. They **like to interact with all kinds of people**, and love to be around children, or young people in general. Excellent communication skills, planning, and conflict solving abilities are also essential. A good applicant is a **good listener**, and they actually want to listen to the needs and desires of other people. A great teacher has the **goals and needs of the school and of the pupils always on their mind**, and prioritizes them to his own goals, moods and preferences.

And you should act in the same way in your interview. Easy to say, hard to do, right? 😊
Actually, it is not that difficult. You just need to reflect these characteristics with your behavior. It means to:

- *Keep an eye contact with your interviewers.*
- *Show enthusiasm and passion for teaching and for children (in your voice, in your answers).*
- *Stay friendly and humble, but have your own opinion about things you'd discuss in the interview.*
- *Stay calm and focused, doesn't matter how long they let you wait, or what happens in an interview.*
- *Talk more about the school, pupils and their goals (and your role in reaching them), not only about your own career ambitions and preferences.*
- *Give clear and complete answers to their questions and do elaborate on them. Show that you can explain things in a simple way.*
- *Be positive about people, about the future, and also about yourself, and your role in the life of the youngsters.*
- *Listen carefully all time.*
- *Ask relevant questions.*

If you follow this advice, interviewers will get the feeling that you have **great personality for a teacher**. And that is priceless information for every educational institution...

People in hiring committees realize that you can always get used to their working environment, or learn some special teaching methods they apply at their school. However, **once you do not have the right personality for this job, you will never become an excellent elementary teacher**, either at their institution, or anywhere else. Unless you change, of course...

Keep it on your mind, and **try to present yourself as a great teacher in every moment of the interviewing process.**

2. On the same wavelength

To act, as a great elementary teacher would act in their daily job, is an interview strategy everyone can apply. One just needs to know the technique. However, there is one other technique that **can bring even better results, if you manage to apply it correctly.**

It consists in **tuning yourself on the “wavelength of the interviewers”**. What does it mean? It means using the same form of communication (*brief sentences if they do so, or long compounds with terminology if they prefer them*), having the same opinions about important issues (*e.g. about challenges in education, discipline in a classroom, role of a teacher, etc.*), being serious, or easy going in an interview (*depends on how the interviewers act, how they approach the meeting with you—if they are serious, or oppositely, easy going*), and so on. Said in simple words, it means to **think as they think, act as they act, talk as they talk.**

We always like to be around likeminded people, those with similar behavior and opinions. That isn't a secret, but the reason is... It is our selfish love.

Liking their behavior, opinions and personality, we in fact take pleasure in our own behavior, opinions and character, and doing so, we convince ourselves about the rightness of our own actions, and attitude.

Interviewers enjoy talking to people who have the same communication, share the same opinions, and approach the meeting in the same way as they do.

If you possess decent emotional intelligence, and can “read” the interviewers and tune yourself on their wavelength, you should try this technique.

People will really enjoy the time spent with you afterwards. What is more, they will consider you *highly qualified for the job*, because it means they are highly qualified themselves. 😊 (Remember, you act and talk as they do.)

They will feel good with you, and will **incline to offer a job to you**. And that is the perfect position at the end of the interview!

Tuning on the wavelength of the interviewers is a powerful technique. When my students tested it in interviews for variety of teaching and education administration positions, they achieved amazing results.

On the other hand, **not everyone can apply this technique properly, especially in the course of a difficult and possibly also stressful interview** (though it shouldn't be a nerve-racking experience for you, after you finished reading this book).

Anyway, if you consider it difficult (nothing wrong with that, it's difficult to apply for most people), you'd better stick to the strategy of playing (or being) *an ideal elementary teacher*.

Choose the suitable technique, improve your demeanor, and make a perfect impression on the people in the hiring committee.

Perspective of an employer

Many job seekers think only about themselves. Let me show you an example.

When asked about a reason of their job application, they refer to *personal fulfillment, good working environment, good salary, etc.* However, **this is a perspective of an employee.**

Schools are not exactly interested in your personal fulfillment, good salary, and all these things. **They care for their own business, not for yours.**

Small group of job seekers (and we can certainly call them successful) **look at things from a perspective of an employer.** They use different answers to the question about applying for teaching career.

They believe to bring certain value to the school, and to the life of every single pupil. That's the reason why they apply for the job.

Simply they do not speak only about what they want to gain as teachers, but also about **things the educational institution can gain from the employment relationship with them.**

Our answers to the most common teacher interview questions (next chapter of the book) **correspond with the perspective of an employer.** It is important to understand this perspective, before you start practicing your answers. To think about an employer is a winning state of mind.

How to answer behavioral questions?

Behavioral interviewing is very typical in most European countries, and is becoming popular also in the US. Interviewers ask the candidates about their behavior in various work-related situations from the past, in order to foresee their behavior in their own school. Let's have a look at one question, to understand it better.

“Tell me about a conflict you had with a parent? How did you handle it?”

Note: If you apply for a first job, you will most likely not get these questions. Still, I suggest you to read this short section and think about it for a while. If they conduct an interview according to the template, they will give you behavioral questions, doesn't matter if you have previous experience. If they do it according to the template, all candidates will answer the same questions, regarding on their employment history.

Many job applicants (especially fresh graduates) respond to behavioral questions in a following way:

- *I do not have such an experience.*
- *This is my first application for a job at school.*
- *I can not recall such situation at the moment.*

These are bad answers. Candidates can hardly get any positive points for them, **because they do not answer the question at all.**

Never say that you cannot answer a question. If you really haven't experienced certain situation yet, I suggest you to use the following formulation:

- *I have not been in such a situation before. However, if it happened, I would do the following: ...*

Behavioral questions are not difficult. Use your creativity, prepare a good answer, and **demonstrate that you know how to act in various situations** that happen in a classroom, regardless of your experience (or the lack of it).

I suggest you to think about all behavioral questions from my guide (analyzed in the next chapter), and **prepare your own answers**, or if you want, your stories.

Clarify the problem, analyze it, explain the solution, and tell the hiring committee the lessons you learned in the process of solving the problem. **Problem – Analysis – Solution – Application – Lesson Learned**. This is an excellent answer to any behavioral question. Word PASAL will help you to remember the way.

III. Twenty-five Most Common Elementary Teacher Interview Questions

Based on my experience, I chose and analyzed twenty-eight most common interview questions for elementary teachers.

We will have a look at **some personal, behavioral and technical questions.**

Short hint explains **why the interviewers use the question, and it shows you what to focus on in the answer.** Several sample answers follow the hint. Feel free to use them as an inspiration for your own interview answers.

1. **Why do you want to become an elementary teacher?**
2. **What do you want to accomplish on this position?**
3. **Where do you see yourself in five years from now?**
4. **What do you think are the key characteristics of a good teacher?**
5. **Can you name the main problems teachers face nowadays?**
6. **What are your strengths and weaknesses?**
7. **How would you approach the students of the first class, on their first day at school? What would you say?**
8. **What teaching methods do you prefer and why?**
9. **Do you think that all the students should be treated equally, or that there should be an individual approach to every student, in accordance with their abilities and potential?**
10. **Imagine that father of one of your students complained about something which was untrue. How would you react?**
11. **What is your opinion about information technology at elementary school?**
12. **What is your opinion about foreign language education at elementary school?**
13. **How would you handle conflicts between students?**
14. **What do you consider to be the toughest aspect of this job?**
15. **What games would you play with your students?**
16. **How would you win the hearts of your pupils?**
17. **What are your expectations for your students?**

18. How do you plan to include parents in their child's classroom?
19. How do you feel about having children with special needs in your classroom?
20. How do you go about teaching something that is not your strength?
21. What kind of relationship do you want to foster with your students?
22. How do you determine each individual child's potential?
23. What are your salary expectations?
24. What are your hobbies?
25. Do you have any questions?

1. Why do you want to become an elementary teacher?

Hint: Motivation of job candidates is one of **the decisive factors in every interview**.

Good salary, clean working environment, or personal challenges, are **not really the things the interviewers seek in an answer of an ideal job candidate...** Oppositely, they want to hear that **you care for their institution, and the education of the pupils**. Therefore, you should talk about your motivation to lead the children, to be a good role model, and about your belief to be a great elementary teacher, an asset for the school.

On the top of that, you should **not connect your job choice to the past**, saying that you want to work as a teacher because it was a field of your study. This answer **sounds like a must, not a desire**. Speak with enthusiasm about your teaching mission and show them that your intentions are correct. After all, you should try to show enthusiasm in every single interview answer.

Sample answers

- I believe that children need good role models and leaders, in order to create healthy attitudes, opinions and formulas of thinking. Too many children come from divorced or incomplete families, and it is not easy for them to find their place in life, their leading figures. They struggle to live well. I want to help them to find their place, and teach them all they need to know to make right decisions. I consider this my mission,

and that's why I decided to pursue career in elementary teaching. I can't imagine doing anything else for living.

- I really love being around children. What is more, I can teach well, and I really enjoy doing this job, as far as my experience goes. One should have a job they can do well, a job they love. That's why I decided for elementary teaching.
- I always liked to listen to the others, and to teach them. I was an excellent student and I helped fellow pupils with their homework. I actually gave tutorage classes in math, not only to the people at the college. So I know what it means to teach, and I feel I have something to give to my students.

2. What do you want to accomplish on this position?

Hint: Focus on the goals of the school, and the children, not on your personal accomplishments only. You should try to present yourself as someone who does work not only for their own sake, but for the sake of the employer and children as well.

Remember, **good employees always have some goals and want to accomplish something in their job and life.** Therefore you should never say that you have no plans and goals, as an elementary teacher.

Sample answers

- I want to help each pupil to achieve their full potential. Also I hope to be a good role model for the children I teach, so they can grow up to well-behaved men and women. That would make me very proud of myself as a teacher.
- I want to achieve good results with the children, and I want to help the school to maintain great reputation and recognition in this district. I will try to accomplish this with my every-day work, trying my best in every lesson and in each after school activity. That's the accomplishment I look for as an elementary teacher.

3. Where do you see yourself in five years from now?

Hint: An ideal candidate for this job **should not aim for promotion**, because there aren't many career growth possibilities for elementary teachers.

Of course, one can be promoted to assistant principal position, but that's not an easy path, and it requires additional studies. Therefore you should say you **prefer to have the same job in five years time**, but want to become a better teacher, a better person. That is a great answer to this question. Alternatively you can focus on some goals from your personal life.

Sample answers

- I love this job and I would be happy to work as an elementary teacher in five years time, as well as in ten years time. Hopefully I'll become a great teacher by that time, someone the students will remember.
- I see myself as a good role model for many children, ideally working at this school. That would be a very nice picture to see in five years time. Let's make it happen!
- I do not have any career plans in such a short time horizon. However, I am thinking about starting a family in four, or in five years time. I would be glad to work as an elementary teacher until then and come back afterwards. However, we never know what tomorrow will bring. Maybe I will start a family, and maybe not. Regarding my job, however, I have no doubts. I want to work as an elementary teacher for a long time.

4. What do you think characterize a good teacher?

Hint: You can use our description of an ideal teacher (page 15). Good teacher is passionate about their job, does it with love, and cares for the needs of the students, and for the goals of the school. They are empathic, good listener, etc, etc.

Even if you do not fulfill the characteristics, it's still good to mention them. **We all strive to improve in life (at least we should)**. Therefore it's good if they see that you understand what makes a good elementary teacher, and that you try to become one.

Sample answer

- Good teacher is passionate about their job, they do it with love, care for the needs of the students, as well as for the goals of the school. They are empathic, good listener and always try to improve their teaching skills. They pay attention to individual needs of each pupil, and strive to become a good role model for their students. I know that I do not fulfill some of these characteristics, but I try my best to improve every day, and become a better teacher.

5. Can you name the main problems teachers face nowadays?

Hint: We live in challenging times. Many youngsters are not interested in their studies, especially in traditional subjects. On the top of that, the **boom of social media and smart phones** brought **new challenges** and many distractions to the classroom. The number of children in a class is increasing, parents have little understanding for the teachers' opinion, and a great numbers of children are obese. It's not an easy time for humanity, let alone for school teachers.

You should name at least couple of challenges, and outline your personal strategy to tackle the challenges. This is one of the differences between good, and exceptional job candidates. Good candidate see only the problems, while the exceptional have some solutions on their mind, or at least an idea of possible solution.

Note: While most problems I mentioned bother teachers and school principals all around the world, some may not apply to your country. Think twice before you pick one for your interview answer.

Sample answers

- Worsening level of communication skills and new forms of addiction, such as social media addiction or smart phone addiction are the new challenges we face. I believe that we need to motivate the children to talk more in lessons. We should use lot of exercises that develop creativity, teamwork and communication, and we need strict rules regarding smart phones.
- It is difficult to teach when you have thirty pupils in class. Too many children are obese, and some of them have little respect for their teachers, or even for their parents. These are the main problems we face nowadays, together with smart phone addiction. I believe that creating a good relationship with children and mixing various teaching methods, is a way to gain back their attention, and respect. And we need to motivate them to exercise more, directly in school, because a healthy body is the first condition of a healthy progress of a child, in all spheres of their life. However, this is my first job application, so my conclusions are yet to be tested in practice.

6. What are your strengths and weaknesses?

Hint: This is one of the **most typical interview questions**. Sometimes I have the feeling that interviewers use it just because everybody else does so in the interviews.

You should talk about strengths that are related to the job of an elementary teacher, and weaknesses that are not related (or at least not so much). Or you can talk about a weakness that could be considered strength by some recruiters, for example being over friendly to pupils.

Anyway, you should not claim to have no weaknesses. **We are human. We aren't perfect.** Pick a weakness that is not very important for this job, and follow up with your efforts to improve on it. The interviewing panel members want to hear exactly that.

Sample answers

- I have a tendency to be over friendly to children. I am aware of this, and I remind to myself that I should keep some distance. From my strengths I can mention good listening skills, and an ability to understand the emotions and problems of young children rather quickly.
- My computer skills are pretty average. However, I attend evening classes and practice at home, in order to improve on the skills. From the strengths, people consider me creative, as I always have some ideas on how to make the learning more engaging, problem-making students co-operate, and a lesson a great experience. And I am very natural around children.

7. How would you approach the students of the first class, on the first day at school? What would you say?

Hint: First day is a stressful experience for both teachers and pupils. Try to **show the people in the hiring committee that you have a plan**. The exact words of your speech are not important. **Your attitude matters**. Show them that you approach the first day cautiously, preparing for it in advance, and minimizing a chance of negative surprises.

You should also **show empathy and understanding of the situation**. Interviewers do not expect to hear an excellent speech, because first class **pupils don't need to be amazed**. They just need to feel understanding, and sense of friendship, and leadership in a new environment.

Sample answer

- I would definitely prepare for it in advance. I would visit the classroom; check the location, facilities, toilets and other things. I would prepare a simple speech, but I would try to not read anything from the paper. On a big day I would ensure to be there before the first pupil arrived. I would greet everyone with smile, and introduce myself

as kindly as possible. I believe that the most important thing on the first day is to make the children feel good and safe in a classroom. I would speak kindly and tell them where they are, and what a school brings to their life. I believe that elementary is a wonderful experience, and they should have the same feeling from the very first day.

8. What teaching methods do you prefer and why?

Hint: Different teaching methods are preferred at various places. The key is to simply **demonstrate your knowledge of various teaching methods**, and to stress that you always use a combination of them, **and adjust your selection to the actual situation in a classroom, and to the subject that is covered.**

You should show your **flexibility**, saying that you do not stick to a single method, just because you like it, or because it is the most convenient one (lecturing). Oppositely, try to show them that **the pupils' gain is your biggest goal**, and that you do everything to make them **engaged**. Needless to say, interviewers love job candidates with this attitude!

Sample answers

- I believe that demonstrating and collaboration are the most effective teaching methods. The side benefit is the development of communication skills and teamwork. However, I have experience with all main teaching methods, including explanation, demonstration, learning by teaching, as well as some unorthodox methods, for example learning by playing. When I prepare my lesson plans, I always think carefully about that and try to apply the most suitable methods in each lesson. I always try to mix it up, so the students experience the unknown and the lessons are not routine, or boring.
- I can't say that I prefer one method to another. Each method has certain benefits and should be applied in some situations. In one class I may prefer explaining, especially if pupils struggled with discipline. Then in some other classes, students are more creative, so I may prefer collaborating. I typically try to apply various methods and observe the reaction of the students, measuring both their progress and interest in the

subject. After a few lessons I typically know which method works with them, and which does not work.

9. Do you think that all students should be treated equally, or that we should follow an individual approach to everyone, according to their abilities and potential?

Hint: This is a **tricky question**, because each teacher and every school principal has a different opinion on the issue. Some of us believe that children should be treated equally, and their rankings should reflect the differences. But other people have other ideas...

My personal opinion is that especially at elementary level, teachers should do their best to motivate weak students to learn, and to enjoy going to school, because it will reflect positively in later stages of their education and life. Therefore I prefer to hire teachers with individual approach to every student. However, **your interviewers can have another opinion**. Probably the best answer is a neutral one, saying that you can apply both approaches, and plan to follow the school standards.

Sample answers

- Each student is different and therefore I approach everyone individually, in terms of communication and explanation. In terms of ranking, however, I treat everyone equally, because it would be discouraging for the best students to get the same rankings as the average students get. On the other hand, I am open to follow your standards, because I believe teachers should be unified, and students should know what they can expect from us.
- Every one has their own path in life. Some children definitely have worse predispositions than the others. It is not their fault, and it is not something we can change... Rankings should reflect the results, but on the other hand, I always do my best to encourage the weak students. If I see they try hard and prepare at home, I will

appreciate it, because it is a good lesson for them. When you work hard, you should reap some rewards, even if you were not blessed with intellect.

10. Imagine that father of one of your students complained about something which was untrue. How would you react?

Hint: Trying to convince unhappy parent is often an uphill battle, especially if their beloved child lied to them. Anyway, **you should** tell the interviewers that you would not be offended, and would always try to explain what really happened and why their child overreacted.

Teachers face some untrue accusations during their career, and the key is to show that you are ready for this aspect of teaching job, and **that it won't affect you negatively**.

Sample answers

- This can happen at any school, doesn't matter how well one teaches. Children simply want to protect themselves, and so they sometimes lie to their parents. It is natural and I have a full understanding for their behavior. After all, I did the same thing a few times as a child... Therefore I would try to calm the parent down, explain them exactly what happened, and show a proof if there's any.
- If it happened, I would stay calm and talk with the parent about the case, trying to understand their point of view. Parents love their children, so it's natural they believe them, and rather blame teachers. I would simply try to explain that they, or their child, might understand a situation in a wrong way. I believe that a good dialogue, combined with some honest compliment of their beloved, can do wonders and solve a conflict quickly.

11. What is your opinion about information technology at elementary school?

Hint: Many principals believe that pupils should work with computers as often as possible in the classroom, while psychologists and sociologists have mostly different opinion.

On the top of that, they may be asking about using computers to teach, but also about IT classes in the first grades, and computers in the classroom. **You should address all of that in your interview answer** or you should ask them to clarify the question, so you know exactly what they are pointing to.

Little research can also help you to find a good answer to this question. Try to speak with someone from school (can be a child, a parent, a teacher) before the start of your interview. Ask them whether they have IT classes, and if they use computers in other classes. This will help you to find the answer that will **resonate with the people in the hiring committee**.

At the end of the day, technology can be our friend, or our enemy. Show the interviewers that you try to find a way to use technology for the benefit of the children.

Sample answers

- I like to use technology in my classes. Pictures, videos, and presentations help us to demonstrate the subject, and they also improve the engagement of the children, since most children like visual aspect of teaching. On the other hand, we should monitor the content they see on their screens, and block certain websites, so they can not reach them.
- In my opinion, IT does not belong to elementary schools. Each child has a computer at home, and they spend too much time playing or watching TV anyway. We should represent a different line of education. However, if we restrict the use of technology to certain classes, and if we follow clear goals, we can manage to use the technology in a way that benefits both us and the children.

12. What is your opinion about foreign language education at elementary school?

Hint: Foreign language education differs to IT. **It is for sake of pupils that they learn languages and parents generally have the same opinion.** Therefore you should support an idea of teaching foreign languages at elementary school.

Note: For some of you this may sound a strange question. In our country, foreign language education is obligatory. However, in some European, Asian and South American countries, it is not, and there is great debate about it. Therefore I decided to include the question in my selection.

Sample answer

- We should do all we can to prepare the children for the future. Once you speak languages, it opens you doors to interesting careers and walks of life. Therefore I believe we should teach foreign languages, and I am ready to do it. I speak Spanish and German fluently.

13. How would you handle conflicts between students?

Hint: If you decided the conflict without proper thinking and real investigation, for example in a favor of one pupil, **you could easily lose trust of the entire class.**

Therefore you should always approach conflicts **carefully, and individually**, listening to both conflict parties and just then deciding, after a careful consideration of all effects your decision will have.

But you should have some conflict resolution standards. If you solved situation A in some way, you should follow the same procedure in a similar situation. You should be transparent and most importantly, you should ensure that the conflict wouldn't grow into something bigger. This is what the interviewers want to hear from a good candidate for teaching job.

Sample answers

- First of all, I would try to create friendly atmosphere in a classroom, by applying collaboration during lessons, in order to strengthen the relationship between the students. Prevention of conflicts is the best resolution strategy. But if I experienced a conflict, I would listen carefully to both parties and try to solve the conflict without harming the emotions of anyone in the class.
- I would try to stay fair, transparent, and always explain the conflict parties the reasons of my decision. I would tell them to shake hands, and I would do my best to educate them that conflicts belong to every relationship, and can eventually strengthen it, if everyone is ready to make some compromise.

14. What do you consider to be the toughest aspect of this job?

Hint: Perfect jobs do not exist. Every position has the bright side, and the dark one. Good job candidates do **not wear pink glasses**, because teachers that idealize their career have a tendency to **burn out quickly**. No wonder that schools prefer to hire realistic teachers.

I suggest you to talk about tough aspects of teaching and admit **that sometimes it is difficult to handle them**. At the same time, however, you should ensure the hiring committee that you are ready to deal with it, and that the mission of a teacher and good feeling from a well-done job is simply stronger, and more important, than the bad things teachers experience.

Sample answers

- It is tough to gain respect of students. For me it is not easy to bear with that, because I always do my best, and prepare for the classes... However, I have the experience and can get over it now. After all, every job has some down sides, and one should not take things personally.

- It is tough for me to keep distance. If there are problems in a classroom, I can't get them out of my head. I know it is not good, to take problems home, but we must accept ourselves as we are. Every single pupil is important for me, and that's why it is difficult to see someone struggling... However, when I talk about the problem with someone—with my husband, or with other teachers, it typically helps me to relax, and get over it.

15. What games would you play with your students?

Hint: Games belong to elementary teaching. Children prefer playing to learning and every good teacher is able to combine the two together. It is also a great way to strengthen relationships between students, and to break the daily classroom routine...

Every teacher has some favorite games. Someone likes table games; another prefers to go outside... To describe dozens of games for elementary school isn't a purpose of this eBook. Therefore, if you do not know any games for pupils, have a look at <http://www.funology.com/games/>. You'll find a lot of inspiration there.

However, the most important thing is to show that you are flexible, understand that games belong to education, and show that you are ready to play with kids.

Sample answers

- I am a strong supporter of learning by playing. So I would surely play games with my students. I prefer games that develop creativity and team spirit. Then some other games can be used to review the lesson, for example Scoot. In summer months, I would take children out and teach them something about the nature, the trees and flowers. We would play some games with ball as well, because I believe children have should move much more than they do nowadays.
- This is my first job application, so I can not tell exactly what games I would play with children. I would definitely seek an inspiration from other colleagues, and I would

carefully think which game was appropriate for every class. But I understand the benefits of learning by playing, so I would definitely play with the children regularly.

16. How would you win hearts of your students?

Hint: One of the **differences between an average and an exceptional teacher is an ability to win the hearts of their students, at least when needed to do so.** If children like the teacher, and the way they teach, they will follow the rules, get involved, and they won't make that many problems.

I suggest you to talk about your strategy of winning their hearts, gaining their respect. It is easier at the elementary level than above. But in any case, you should **convince the hiring committee that you understand the importance of building good relationship** with your pupils, and have some ideas on how to do it.

Sample answers

- I believe that teachers are in the classes for students, not contrariwise. I always look at every lesson, exam, or after school activity from the point of view of the children. Will it help them in their future life? Are they going to enjoy doing it? Does it correspond with the overall direction we have at school? I always ask myself these questions and I believe it is the right way to win the hearts of the students.
- Young people are sensitive. I believe one can win their heart being humble and friendly. Being superbly authoritative leads to barriers between teacher and their pupils, and it make life of everyone difficult. Children should always feel free to speak and to decide, and we should just set some general directions and borders to limit their freedom.

17. What are your expectations for the students?

Hint: Another tricky question. At one side, you should have some expectations for your students, since it would be difficult to build discipline in a classroom without having expectations, and you'd also struggle to set goals for yourself as a teacher.

But on the other hand, **the greatest teachers are focused on their own job, trying to be the best, do the most for the children, and they do not expect much from their students.**

Sample answers

- To be honest, I do not have any extra expectations for my students. It's an elementary school, so it's natural that the discipline won't be excellent all time. I just expect them to respect each other, be on time and give me a chance as a teacher. I will do my best in every lesson and I am sure that I will convince them that it is worth to pay attention to my words, and to actively participate in the lessons.
- I expect only basic things. Not making too much noise, respect the other pupils, come to class prepared. I know that if pupils stick to the rules depends on many things, such as their parents, their predispositions to study, things that happen at their homes, and the quality of my teaching. The only thing I can influence is the quality of my teaching, and I plan to focus mostly on that.

18. How do you plan to include parents in their child's classroom?

Hint: Parent teacher meetings are very important, especially at the elementary level of education. You should show the interviewers that you **understand the importance of these meetings**, and plan to organize them regularly. On the top of that, do not hesitate to elaborate on it, explaining what you would discuss with the parents.

You can also suggest **inviting parents to afterschool activities**, such as carnival, or sports day. Saying that, you **send a clear sign that you plan to actively participate in the afterschool activities**. That's a nice bonus for this particular interview answer.

Sample answers

- I plan to have regular one to one parent teacher meetings, as I believe it's crucial that they know about their child's strengths and weaknesses, and how we do progress in the class. I plan to prepare a report for each child, and carefully discuss all important points with the parent, such as difficult areas, participation in lessons, working to their ability, etc. I will always compliment the child for something, in order to maintain good atmosphere in the meeting. In the end I will suggest a goal for the next period, until the next meeting we have with the parent.
- I believe that parents should not excessively interfere in a classroom. On the other hand, they should be informed, so I plan to organize monthly parent teacher meetings. I also plan to invite parents to afterschool activities, such as carnival. There should be a decent level of involvement, but they should also understand that teachers know what they do and why they do it.

19. How do you feel about having children with special needs in your classroom?

Hint: You can sometimes find the right interview answer directly in the question. If the interviewers ask about having children with special needs, most likely some of them attend the school.

Therefore I suggest you to say that you consider it a positive challenge. If you can, show empathy for people who bare a difficult fate.

You can elaborate on your answer with **previous experience with special needs** (from school, or from personal life).

Sample answers

- I am a supporter of integration and believe that children with special needs should attend regular classes. Of course, I would prepare an individual education plan for

each pupil (if there's not another staff member who's assigned the task), in order to keep them motivated and maintain progress. I would also consult colleagues from special education department, to help me figure out how to progress in each individual case.

- It is a challenge and I know what it takes to teach a handicapped child, because I have a cousin with Down syndrome. However, these pupils should definitely be integrated into classes. I am ready to do my best to help every child with special needs to become independent in their life, at least as much as their condition allows.

20. How do you go about teaching something that is not your strength?

Hint: We all have subjects or lessons that we do not like to teach, or struggle teaching. However, **you should have confidence in yourself** and tell the interviewers that you feel qualified to teach the lessons.

I also suggest saying that you strive to improve on your weak subjects, becoming a better teacher.

Sample answers

- I was never good in teaching math, but when we speak about elementary level, I can teach anything. And it is like with any other job – there are aspects you like, and aspects you don't like. I do not like teaching math, but I know it is a part of my job and I accept that as a fact...
- This is my first job application, so it's hard to say what my strengths and weaknesses are, in terms of teaching various topics or subjects. I personally feel ready to teach everything, but only time will tell if I struggle with certain lessons or subjects. Anyway, I am ready to put effort into my afterschool preparation, and work on my teaching skills, to become a better teacher.

21. What kind of relationship do you want to foster with your students?

Hint: Good elementary teachers always foster **friendly and professional relationship with their students**. Trust is the word to remember, and building trust is mostly your task. “The ball is in your hands.” **You should take the initiative** and use both verbal and nonverbal communication to show the students that you care, that you are accessible, and ready to listen to their needs and problems. Another good idea is to say that doing your job well, and listening to the needs of the students, is a natural way of building trust, a way you prefer to follow.

At the end of the day we can fail to build good relationship with some students, simply because **it does not depend only on our approach**. But it doesn't change anything on the fact that **you should believe in a value of a good connection, and talk about building it**.

Sample answers

- I always try to have friendly relationship with my students. First of all, I do everything to show them that I care. That means coming in time, preparing for a lessons, sticking to the promises I made, doing extra exercises, and most importantly, listening to their needs and desires. I believe they can feel that I really care, and that I try to do my job well. However, I realize it's not possible to build a good relationship with every single pupil, because it depends also on their will, and many other factors that aren't under my control.
- I want to foster a friendly relationship of trust. I want to talk about myself openly, so pupils may open themselves. I want to be not only their teacher, but also someone they can talk to, referring to their problems and challenges.

22. How do you determine each individual child's potential?

Hint: It is not easy to determine the child's potential, especially in the early grades. However, your **empathy, observation skills, and various formal and informal assessments** can help you with the task.

Alternatively, you can **show humility**, saying that you do not consider yourself qualified to determine child's potential, stressing that **willpower and determination** are more important than the potential we have.

Sample answers

- I believe that each child has some talent, and can contribute to the class. I will do my best to determine their strengths and weaknesses, using formal and informal assessment, observation, and talking with their parents. I believe it's one of my main goals as a teacher, to uncover their potential and motivate them to develop it.
- To be honest, I do not consider myself qualified to see child's potential in an early age. It's difficult, especially if we talk about introverts. I always motivate children to work hard, and to follow their dreams (both small and big goals), so they can hopefully achieve their potential one day. Willpower and determination is something teachers can influence and develop in children, and I believe we should work mostly on that

23. What are your salary expectations?

Hint: It is important to stress that you do not go to work just to get a paycheck at the end of the month.

And if you have to say a number, I suggest you to pick median salary for teachers in your country/county/district. You will find the recent data online, for example on salary.com website.

After all, we should not forget that most schools belong to the public sector. They use salary tables, and therefore there isn't any room for salary negotiation in an interview. Having said that, if you say a number, you should **never say less than you would actually accept**.

Sample answer:

- *Salary is not the decisive factor for me. I would be very happy earning an average salary for elementary school teacher in this area, and that is about \$45,000, according to the statistics from salary.com website.*

24. What are your hobbies?

Hint: Different people lead teaching interviews. Vice principals, principals, or other people from school, people from agencies, anyone! These people are often good teachers and education administrators, but **they aren't professional interviewers**. Therefore, you can expect to get one or two informal questions as well, something that is not typical for most other interviews.

However, in teaching interviews, **personal preferences will always play some role**. Just think about it. Most teachers have adequate qualification. If a few of them meet in an interview, and some are well prepared, the personal preferences will decide the winner from these few shortlisted candidates.

For this reason, **it's good to have something in common with your potential colleagues, with the people sitting in the hiring committee**.

I suggest you to name as many things as possible for your hobbies, as it increases a chance of matching your interests with their hobbies—and getting some affection. And of course, do not forget to say that teaching is also your hobby, that you enjoy doing it.

Sample answer

- My job is my hobby. I like teaching and I try to become a better teacher every year, so I study a lot in my free time. But I also like sports, going out with friends, and

spending time with family. I like to do something for third sector as well. To be honest, I like many things and I am always open to trying something new.

25. Do you have any questions?

Hint: Asking questions shows that you care about the job opportunity, that you want to know more, that you are motivated to get the job.

However, you should not ask about something that was clearly explained on the job description, or already said in an interview. Good things to inquire about are the **working environment, challenges the school faces, next steps of recruitment process, goals of the school, and similar points.**

Sample answers

- *What goals have you set for the upcoming school year?*
- *What are the next steps of recruitment process?*
- *What are the biggest challenges you face in the classrooms?*

Right preparation for the interview questions

As you can imagine, there are **hundreds of possible questions one can get in an elementary teacher interview.** We tried to cover all important subjects in our short selection, but interviewers can use different wording, or completely different questions, to assess the same capacities of the job candidates.

However, it is impossible to list, and to prepare for, all possible questions. If you tried to do so, it would only stress you out, and at the end of the day you would hardly remember a single answer you prepared upfront.

The key to job interview success lies in **mastering the right principles and attitudes, those interviewers seek in the best applicant for the job (and in their answers)**. We outlined it in detail in our answers to twenty-five elementary teacher interview questions, as well as in other sections of this book.

That's the only possible way to be prepared for everything that can happen in your interview, because after all, nobody can tell the exact questions they will ask you.

IV. Last Impression and Interview Follow-up

Most job applicants do not use the opportunity to leave a good last impression. It is a pity.

Once your interview finished, you should **thank the interviewers** for their time, **praise them for their efforts**, and simply **leave a room in a positive and friendly manner**. That is called *leaving a good last impression*.

Even if you do not have a good feeling from the interview that just finished, you should control your emotions, and leave a room with a smile on your face.

Last look into the eyes, firm hand shake, and good words can do a lot, especially if the interview is “undecided”, and personal preferences of the interviewers play a role, which happens quite often at schools.

What is more, I suggest you **to send a follow up letter** one day after your interview. You can inspire yourself with a following letter, or look for good samples on the internet. Just do not forget to modify it a little, according to the situation, and to your own style of writing.

Dear Mr. Abc,

I want to thank you for giving me a chance to present myself in the interview for elementary teacher position at XYZ School.

After the interview with you, I am really motivated to work on this position. I like the vision, goals and ideas of the institution, as well as the working environment in the place. I believe I can fit well into your team, and bring value to the classroom.

I hope you will make a right decision and wish you all the best in your job.

Best Regards

Your name

Your phone number

Your email

It is always good **to send at least a short thank you note** (you can find countless examples online), in order to demonstrate that your interest for the job lasts after the interview.

Follow up letter can not win you a job contract, but it can help you to get one, or to open some doors that lead to other job contracts. It is easy to send a letter and you should send it after every interview. **Build bridges, not fences.**

Final Word

Interview for a position of an elementary teacher belongs to difficult job interviews.

One competes against **many other applicants**, all of them having similar qualification and experience. What is more, interviewers use different forms of questions, such as personal, situational and technical, and they often use a personality test as well.

They do it to get a complete picture of your abilities, and to **uncover some important and some minor differences** between you and other people who apply for the same job.

However, men and women sitting in the interviewing panel are only people, like I and you... They have their desires, they like to be praised for their work, and they can not resist hiring an applicant who presents themselves as a great applicant for a job of an elementary teacher, at their school. That's how it really works in every interview.

If you use the knowledge from this book, and put it to practice, if you present yourself in a right way, bring everything with you, and offer good answers to the interview questions—having on your mind the things you learned from this book, **they will have no other option to hiring you.**

I recommend you to read the entire eBook once again, mock the answers to interview questions couple of times, practice with a friend (if possible), and follow the suggestions. Doing so, you can be sure you did your best to prepare for your interview.

Thank you for reading, and see you in an interview!



Glen Hughins,
Your Personal Job Interview Coach