

# 20-Minute Interview Lesson Guidance

## ► Choosing the 20-minute format

Interview lessons range from 20 minutes to a full hour. Their length will often be dictated by the number of interviewees and the level of experience required for the job. Early Career Teacher (ECT) interviews are often shorter and 20 minutes can be enough to help you decide if a candidate has the teaching potential you're looking for.

## ► What is the purpose of a 20-minute interview lesson?

What are you trying to find out? It's useful to think about the interview lesson as an opportunity to collect evidence about the candidate that won't be available from the interview or application form.

Although 20 minutes doesn't seem long, in that time you should be able to observe the following:

1. The relationship that the candidate builds with the children and how they interact with them
2. The candidate's knowledge and understanding of the curriculum, specific to the year group(s) taught
3. Evidence of their understanding and use of teaching and learning principles or strategies

## ► Select a focus

There should be a specific purpose of the interview lesson that should inform the focus.

Focus	Purpose
<b>Open</b> - Candidates are free to choose their own focus.	To see the candidate's own style, strengths, creativity and initiative
<b>Subject area</b> - Candidates are given a specific curriculum subject to teach, usually maths or English.	To find a teacher with a particular subject strength to meet the school's needs
<b>Specific topic</b> - Candidates are given a topic area within a particular subject, e.g. fractions in maths or vocabulary in English.	To enable direct comparison between candidates To ensure that all candidates teach a challenging topic area
<b>Learning objective</b> - Candidates are given the specific learning objective, taken from the national curriculum for the year group.	To ensure that all candidates teach a challenging learning objective To find a candidate who is a good match with your school's areas for development within a subject area, e.g. reasoning in maths or speaking and listening in English
<b>Teaching strategy</b> - Candidates are given a specific teaching and learning strategy to demonstrate, e.g. questioning.	To assess how deep the candidate's understanding of a teaching and learning principle is To find a good fit with the school's area of focus or development

## ► Communicating the task

Making the task and success criteria clear and explicit ensures that you bring the best out of all candidates. It also makes the task of observing and analysing the lesson much easier, especially if multiple observers are involved. In addition, it provides a clear context in which to discuss the lesson with the candidate, either during the interview or when giving feedback later.

Some schools choose to break down the job description, stating which criteria should be evidenced in each part of the application and interview process.

## ► What can you expect to see in a 20-minute lesson?

20 minutes is not enough time to teach a traditional lesson and candidates should not be expected to teach a scaled-down version of a normal lesson. There will probably not be any time for extended, independent written work. Instead, a 20-minute lesson observation could include:

- Discussion
- Questioning
- Use of whiteboards
- Use of manipulative resources
- Problem-solving
- Speaking and listening
- Collaboration
- Learning game
- Use of a high-quality text

In a 20-minute lesson, the following teaching and learning strategies should be evident:

What are you looking for?	What is the evidence?
Relevant learning objective	→ Learning objective aligned with national curriculum/EYFS for the appropriate year group(s)
Good preparation	→ Prior contact with school to establish information about the class (email or phone) → Resources ready at the start of the lesson → Organisation of technology (if relevant) → Punctuality and good time keeping throughout the lesson
Challenge for all pupils	→ Choice of objective and/or activity, with potential for challenge → High-quality text used (if relevant) → Support/scaffolding for pupils with SEND/lower attaining pupils → Adaptations for specific needs if relevant → Greater depth activities/questions available
Differentiation	→ Quick assessment strategies used at the start of the lesson → Activity design includes various levels of challenge → Pupils may choose their own appropriate level of challenge → Differentiated resources → Differentiated questioning

Effective questioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Use of open questions</li><li>→ Questioning strategies for the whole class or group, e.g. talk partners, no hands</li><li>→ One-to-one targeted questioning</li><li>→ Follow-up questions to deepen thinking</li></ul>
Pupil engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Choice of engaging and relevant content</li><li>→ Activity design motivates and engages</li><li>→ Involvement of all pupils</li></ul>
Depth of thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Activity design encourages deeper thinking</li><li>→ Questioning and discussion encourage deeper thinking</li></ul>
Instruction, modelling or explanation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Teacher whole-class/group input is clear</li><li>→ Teacher extends learning through group input and one-to-one discussions</li></ul>