

“Ace the Job Interview” Practice Modules

Seamlessly integrates with *Business Communication Today*, 16th Edition, ensuring consistent messaging and effortless adoption into your existing curriculum.



Preview

This framework provides a practical, scalable approach to help students develop professional interview skills through self-directed practice and structured self-assessment. Building on Chapters 18 (Building Careers and Writing Résumés) and 19 (Applying and Interviewing for Employment) of *Business Communication Today*, these modules transform textbook knowledge into practiced skills through repeated, low-stakes rehearsal.

Core Concept: Students record themselves answering interview questions, watch their recordings, and use structured rubrics to self-critique their performance. This simple cycle—practice, review, reflect, improve—builds genuine interview confidence through demonstrated competence.



1. Learning Objectives

By completing these practice modules, students will be able to:

- Identify and respond appropriately to behavioral, situational, and other common interview question types (Ch. 19, LO 19-1)
 - Construct compelling STAR method responses that clearly communicate experiences and achievements (Ch. 19)
 - Deliver confident answers with strong verbal and nonverbal communication (Ch. 2, Ch. 16)
 - Self-assess critically to identify specific areas for improvement (Ch. 6)
 - Adapt communication style to different interview contexts (Ch. 3)
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2. Foundational Content: What Students Need to Know

Interview Types (Ch. 19)

Students should understand the major interview formats before practicing:

Behavioral interviews ask about past experiences: "Tell me about a time you..." These assess how candidates have actually handled situations, based on the principle that past behavior predicts future performance.

Situational interviews present hypothetical scenarios: "What would you do if...?" These test judgment and problem-solving approaches for situations candidates may not have experienced.

Technical interviews evaluate role-specific skills through coding challenges, case studies, portfolio reviews, or field-specific questions.

Panel interviews involve multiple interviewers simultaneously, requiring candidates to engage all evaluators while maintaining composure.

The STAR Method (Ch. 19)

The STAR framework structures behavioral interview responses effectively:

Situation: Brief context (who, what, where, when)

Task: Your specific responsibility or challenge

Action: Detailed steps you took (use "I" statements)

Result: Measurable outcomes and lessons learned

Example STAR Response:

Weak: "When I was team leader for a project, we had problems with people not working. I talked to them and we got a good grade."

Strong: "In my marketing capstone, I led a team of five on a semester-long campaign project worth 40% of our grade (Situation). Three weeks in, two members consistently missed deadlines and we fell two weeks behind (Task). I met individually with each person to understand their barriers—one was overwhelmed with family responsibilities, the other unclear on expectations (Action). I broke their work into smaller milestones with check-ins and redistributed some tasks to members with more capacity. We submitted one day early and received the highest grade in the class, 94% (Result)."

Key Teaching Points:

- Keep Situation brief (20-30% of response time)
- Action should be the longest section (40-50%)
- Always quantify Results when possible
- Total response: 1.5-2 minutes for behavioral questions

Nonverbal Communication (Ch. 2, Ch. 16)

Students often underestimate how much body language affects interview impressions.

Practice should address:

In-person interviews:

- Maintain eye contact 60-70% of the time
- Sit upright with open posture (no crossed arms)
- Use natural hand gestures to emphasize points
- Match facial expressions to content

Virtual interviews:

- Position camera at eye level
- Look at the camera when speaking (not the screen)
- Ensure good lighting from in front, not behind
- Use plain, professional backgrounds
- Test technology beforehand

Recording with smartphones: Modern phones have excellent cameras and offer flexibility in positioning. Students can practice anywhere using their cellphones, making interview preparation more accessible.



3. The Practice Cycle: How the Modules Work

Step 1: Select Questions

Provide students with a curated question bank organized by:

- Competency (Teamwork, Leadership, Problem-Solving, Communication, Adaptability)
- Question type (Behavioral, Situational, Strengths/Weaknesses)
- Difficulty (Foundational, Intermediate, Advanced)

Note: A separate document provides 100 foundational questions to get started. Instructors can expand this library over time with industry-specific or institution-specific questions.

Step 2: Record Responses

Students record themselves answering questions using:

- Computer webcam (standard option)
- Smartphone (positioned at eye level on a stand or prop)
- Audio only (for focusing purely on verbal content)

Simple technical setup: Students need only a device with a camera/microphone and basic recording capability. Free tools like Zoom (record to computer), phone camera apps, or

simple browser-based recording work perfectly. No specialized software required.

Step 3: Review Recording

Students watch their recording immediately after recording while the experience is fresh.

They should watch at least twice:

- First viewing: Overall impression—how did it feel?
- Second viewing: Detailed analysis using the self-critique rubric

Step 4: Self-Critique Using Structured Rubric

The rubric focuses attention on specific, observable elements:

Content Quality (40%)

- ✓ Directly answered the question asked
- ✓ Used STAR structure for behavioral questions
- ✓ Provided specific, relevant examples
- ✓ Included measurable achievements
- ✓ Connected experience to role requirements

Verbal Delivery (30%)

- ✓ Clear articulation and appropriate volume
- ✓ Confident tone without arrogance
- ✓ Varied pacing (not monotone)
- ✓ Minimal filler words (um, uh, like)
- ✓ Natural pauses for emphasis

Nonverbal Communication (20%)

- ✓ Consistent eye contact with camera
- ✓ Professional posture and presence
- ✓ Appropriate gestures and expressions
- ✓ Engaged, enthusiastic demeanor

Time Management (10%)

- ✓ Appropriate length (1-2 min for behavioral, 30-60 sec for simple questions)
- ✓ Stayed focused without rambling

Reflection Questions:

- What was strongest about this response?
- If you could re-answer, what would you change?
- What specific improvement will you target in your next practice?

Step 5: Practice Again

Students select another question and repeat the cycle, applying lessons learned. Progress

comes through repetition and incremental improvement.



4. Three Practice Modes

Offer students flexibility in how they practice:

Quick Drill (5-10 minutes)

- 3-5 random questions
- Focus on spontaneous, unrehearsed responses
- Builds comfort thinking on feet
- Minimal or no recording review (students can simply practice verbally)

Targeted Practice (15-20 minutes)

- 5-8 questions in a specific competency area
- Students record and review each response
- Ideal for addressing identified weaknesses
- Track improvement over multiple sessions

Mock Interview (30-45 minutes)

- 10-12 questions sequenced to simulate real interviews
 - Includes opening small talk and closing ("Do you have questions for me?")
 - Record entire session
 - Full self-critique review
 - Complete 2-3 times before actual interviews
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5. Building Your Question Library

Start with the provided 100 foundational questions (see section below). These cover core competencies and work across industries.

Expand over time by:

- Adding industry-specific questions based on your students' career paths (finance, tech, healthcare, education, etc.)
- Collecting questions from employers during industry advisory board meetings or career fair conversations
- Gathering questions from students after they interview—ask them to share what they

were actually asked

- Adapting questions from Ch. 19 and other business communication resources
- Including current workplace topics like remote work, diversity and inclusion, ethical dilemmas, and technological change



6. Two-Week Implementation for Business Communication Course

Week 1: Introduction and Foundation (3 class hours total)

Day 1 (50 minutes):

- Introduce interview practice modules (10 min)
- Teach STAR method with examples from Ch. 19 (20 min)
- Cover nonverbal communication essentials (10 min)
- Demonstrate recording and self-critique process (10 min)

Between Day 1 and Day 2:

- Students complete first Quick Drill (3-5 questions, self-paced outside class)
- Students submit brief reflection: "What felt most challenging?"

Day 2 (50 minutes):

- Debrief first practice experience (15 min)
- Address common questions and concerns (10 min)
- Discuss self-critique rubric in detail (15 min)
- Assign Targeted Practice (10 questions in one competency area)

Between Day 2 and Day 3:

- Students complete Targeted Practice (10 questions, self-paced)
- Students identify patterns in their performance

Day 3 (50 minutes):

- Small group discussions: Share one strength and one improvement area (20 min)
- Introduce Mock Interview assignment (10 min)
- Q&A and troubleshooting (20 min)

Week 2: Mock Interviews and Reflection

Outside of class:

- Students complete Mock Interview (30-45 minutes, self-paced)

- Students write self-critique report analyzing performance

Day 4 (50 minutes):

- Debrief Mock Interview experience (20 min)
- Students share insights and lessons learned (20 min)
- Connect to career services resources (10 min)

Final Assignment (due end of Week 2):

- Students submit 2-3 page self-critique report analyzing their Mock Interview
- Report must identify strengths, weaknesses, and improvement strategies
- Students reference course concepts from Ch. 18-19

Total Class Time Required: 4 class sessions (approximately 200 minutes)

What Students Do Outside Class:

- Complete assigned practice sessions (Quick Drill, Targeted Practice, Mock Interview)
- Watch and critique their recordings using rubric
- Write self-critique report



7. Grading Approach

Simple, Reflection-Based Assessment:

Practice Completion (40%):

- Quick Drill completed (10%)
- Targeted Practice completed (10 questions) (15%)
- Mock Interview completed (15%)

Self-Critique Report (60%):

Students submit one comprehensive report (2-3 pages) analyzing their Mock Interview performance.

Rubric criteria:

- Identifies specific strengths and weaknesses (20 points): Uses concrete evidence from recording
- References course concepts (20 points): Connects to STAR method, nonverbal communication, audience adaptation from Ch. 18-19
- Demonstrates growth mindset (10 points): Shows openness to improvement, not defensiveness
- Sets concrete improvement goals (10 points): Specific, actionable strategies for continued development

Sample assignment prompt:

"Analyze your Mock Interview recording using the self-critique rubric. In 2-3 pages, identify two strengths and two areas for improvement, citing specific evidence from your recording. Explain how concepts from Chapters 18-19 (STAR method, nonverbal communication, audience analysis) informed your self-assessment. Describe your strategy for continued improvement before real interviews."



8. Minimal Technology Approach

You don't need specialized software or platforms. Here's a simple, free approach:

Recording Options:

- Zoom: Students record themselves in a solo Zoom meeting (free account), save to computer
- Phone camera: Students use built-in camera app, prop phone at eye level
- Photo Booth (Mac) / Camera (Windows): Built-in computer applications

Storage:

- Students save recordings on their own devices
- Optional: Create shared Google Drive or OneDrive folder where students can upload recordings if they want feedback
- Emphasize students own and control their recordings

Question Distribution:

- Share question bank as PDF, Word document, or Google Doc via your LMS

Self-Critique Rubric:

- Provide as downloadable PDF or Word template via your LMS
- Students complete rubric digitally or print and handwrite
- Submit final report via LMS

Total tech requirement: Students need a device with camera/microphone (phone, laptop, or tablet) and somewhere to save video files. That's it.



9. Supporting Student Success

Orient Students to the Purpose

"Interview skills are learned, not innate. Like any communication skill covered in this course, improvement requires practice with feedback. These modules give you a safe space to make mistakes, experiment, and build genuine confidence over the next two weeks."

Set Realistic Expectations

- Early recordings will feel awkward—that's normal
- Improvement happens quickly with focused practice
- The process matters more than perfect responses
- Everyone struggles with some question types

Address Common Concerns

- "I hate watching myself on video" → Gets easier with repetition; focus on specific improvement areas, not overall appearance
- "I don't have experiences for behavioral questions" → Academic projects, extracurricular activities, part-time jobs, volunteer work all provide material
- "I'm not good at interviews" → That's why we practice! Skill comes through deliberate rehearsal

Troubleshooting

Students avoiding recording:

- Allow audio-only option for those uncomfortable with video
- Emphasize recordings are private unless students choose to share
- Model vulnerability by showing your own practice recording (with imperfections)

Perfectionistic students:

- Remind them practice should reveal areas for growth, not showcase perfection
- Emphasize that mistakes during practice prevent mistakes in real interviews



10. Benefits Summary

For Students

- Safe environment to make mistakes and learn
- Builds authentic confidence through demonstrated competence in just two weeks
- Flexible practice anytime, anywhere, at own pace
- Specific feedback through structured self-assessment
- Transferable skills beyond interviewing (public speaking, storytelling, self-evaluation)

For Instructors

- Minimal class time (4 sessions over two weeks)

- Evidence-based content aligned with Business Communication Today
 - Simple grading (completion + one reflection paper)
 - Scalable for large classes
 - Low technology burden (students use tools they already have)
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Getting Started: Your Action Plan

Before Week 1:

- Review Business Communication Today Chapters 18-19
- Access the 100 foundational questions (separate document)
- Upload question bank and self-critique rubric to your LMS
- Create assignment descriptions with due dates
- Prepare STAR method examples for Day 1

Week 1:

- Day 1: Introduce modules, teach STAR, demonstrate process
- Day 2: Debrief first practice, review rubric
- Day 3: Small groups share insights, introduce Mock Interview

Week 2:

- Day 4: Debrief Mock Interviews, connect to career services
- Collect self-critique reports
- Grade reports using provided rubric

After Two Weeks:

- Gather brief student feedback (What worked? What would improve the experience?)
 - Note adjustments for next semester
 - Share experience with colleagues
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Conclusion

This streamlined two-week approach delivers meaningful interview preparation without overwhelming your course schedule. Students complete three practice sessions (Quick Drill, Targeted Practice, Mock Interview) and one reflective analysis—enough to build awareness, practice key skills, and gain confidence, all while requiring just four class sessions from you. The modules align perfectly with Chapters 18 and 19 of Business Communication Today,

transforming textbook concepts into practiced capabilities. Students who engage seriously with this two-week intensive will enter real interviews having answered 15-20 questions, received structured self-feedback, and developed authentic confidence grounded in demonstrated ability.

Start simple. Use the 100 provided questions. Have students record on their phones. Award credit for completion and thoughtful reflection. Your students will benefit immediately from structured interview practice, and you'll spend minimal class time while delivering maximum career readiness impact.



Quick Reference Card

Two-Week Schedule:

- Week 1: Introduction, demonstration, Quick Drill, Targeted Practice
- Week 2: Mock Interview, debrief, self-critique report due

Student Assignments:

- Quick Drill (3-5 questions)
- Targeted Practice (10 questions)
- Mock Interview (10-12 questions)
- Self-Critique Report (2-3 pages)

STAR Method: Situation → Task → Action → Result (1.5-2 minutes)

Recording Options: Zoom, phone camera, computer camera

Key Success Factor: Students practice independently; class time for instruction and debrief only



100 Foundational Interview Questions

100 Foundational Interview Questions

(Organized by Competency for *Business Communication Today* Students)

TEAMWORK & COLLABORATION (20 Questions)

Behavioral Questions

Tell me about a time you worked effectively as part of a team.

Describe a situation where you had to work with a difficult team member.

Tell me about a time when your team disagreed on how to approach a project.
Give me an example of when you had to compromise to achieve a team goal.
Describe a time when you helped a struggling team member.
Tell me about your most successful team project and your role in it.
Describe a situation where you had to adapt your communication style to work with diverse team members.
Tell me about a time when you had to give constructive feedback to a teammate.
Give me an example of when you built consensus among team members with different opinions.
Describe a time when you had to rely on others to complete your own work.

Situational Questions

What would you do if you discovered a team member wasn't completing their assigned tasks?
How would you handle a situation where two team members have conflicting ideas about the project direction?
If you joined a team with an established dynamic, how would you integrate yourself?
What would you do if you disagreed with your team's decision but were outvoted?
How would you approach working with a team member who has a very different work style than you?

General Questions

What role do you typically play on a team?
How do you handle conflict within a team?
What makes a team successful in your view?
Describe your ideal team environment.
How do you balance individual accountability with team collaboration?

LEADERSHIP & INITIATIVE (20 Questions)

Behavioral Questions

Tell me about a time when you took the lead on a project or initiative.
Describe a situation where you motivated others to complete a challenging task.
Give me an example of when you took initiative without being asked.
Tell me about a time when you had to delegate responsibilities to others.
Describe a situation where you had to lead a team through a difficult challenge.
Tell me about a time when you identified a problem and took action to solve it.
Give me an example of when you had to make an unpopular decision as a leader.
Describe a time when you mentored or coached someone.
Tell me about a project you initiated from start to finish.
Describe a situation where you had to lead people who were initially resistant to your ideas.

Situational Questions

What would you do if you were leading a project and it was falling behind schedule?

How would you handle leading a team where some members have more experience than you?

If you had to choose between completing a project on time or maintaining quality, what would you do?

What would you do if a team member challenged your leadership publicly?

How would you motivate a team that seems disengaged or unmotivated?

General Questions

What's your leadership style?

How do you inspire others to perform their best?

What's the difference between a boss and a leader?

How do you handle the pressure of leadership?

What do you think is the most important quality in a leader?

PROBLEM-SOLVING & CRITICAL THINKING (20 Questions)

Behavioral Questions

Tell me about a time when you faced a significant challenge and how you overcame it.

Describe a situation where you had to solve a problem with limited information.

Give me an example of when you had to think creatively to solve a problem.

Tell me about a time when you had to analyze data or information to make a decision.

Describe a situation where your initial solution to a problem didn't work.

Tell me about a complex problem you broke down into manageable parts.

Give me an example of when you had to solve a problem under time pressure.

Describe a time when you identified a potential problem before it became serious.

Tell me about a time when you had to choose between multiple solutions to a problem.

Describe a situation where you had to convince others that your solution was the best approach.

Situational Questions

What would you do if you were assigned a project in an area where you had no prior experience?

How would you approach a situation where standard procedures weren't producing desired results?

If you discovered a more efficient way to do something, but it went against established protocol, what would you do?

What would you do if you had to make an important decision without having all the information you needed?

How would you handle a situation where your solution to a problem created a new, different problem?

General Questions

Walk me through your problem-solving process.

How do you prioritize when you have multiple problems to solve?

What tools or techniques do you use to analyze problems?

How do you know when you've found the right solution?

Describe a time when you learned from a failed solution.

COMMUNICATION & INTERPERSONAL SKILLS (20 Questions)

Behavioral Questions

Tell me about a time when you had to explain something complex to someone with no background in the subject.

Describe a situation where you had to communicate bad news to someone.

Give me an example of when you had to persuade someone to see things your way.

Tell me about a time when you had to adjust your communication style for different audiences.

Describe a situation where miscommunication caused a problem and how you resolved it.

Tell me about a time when you had to listen carefully to understand someone's needs.

Give me an example of when you had to communicate effectively in writing.

Describe a time when you had to present information to a group.

Tell me about a situation where you had to communicate across cultural or language barriers.

Give me an example of when you received difficult feedback and how you responded.

Situational Questions

What would you do if you sent an important email and realized later that you made a significant error?

How would you handle a situation where someone misunderstood your instructions?

If you needed information from a colleague who was very busy, how would you approach them?

What would you do if you were in a meeting and realized others weren't understanding your point?

How would you communicate a deadline change to a frustrated client or stakeholder?

General Questions

How do you ensure your written communication is clear and professional?

What's your approach to giving constructive criticism?

How do you build rapport with new colleagues or clients?

What communication skills do you want to continue developing?

How do you handle communication in high-stress situations?

ADAPTABILITY & RESILIENCE (20 Questions)

Behavioral Questions

Tell me about a time when you had to adapt to a significant change at work or school.

Describe a situation where you had to learn something new quickly.

Give me an example of when you failed at something and what you learned.

Tell me about a time when you had to work outside your comfort zone.

Describe a situation where priorities changed suddenly and you had to adjust.
Tell me about a time when you received criticism and how you handled it.
Give me an example of when you had to manage multiple competing deadlines.
Describe a situation where you had to deal with ambiguity or uncertainty.
Tell me about a time when you bounced back from a setback or disappointment.
Give me an example of when you had to change your approach because something wasn't working.

Situational Questions

What would you do if your manager asked you to do something you'd never done before and didn't know how to do?
How would you handle it if a major project you'd been working on for months was suddenly canceled?
If you received negative feedback on your performance, how would you respond?
What would you do if company policies or procedures changed in a way you disagreed with?
How would you manage if you were assigned to work in a different department for a month?

General Questions

How do you handle stress and pressure?
What do you do when you don't know the answer to something?
How do you stay motivated when facing obstacles?
What's the biggest change you've had to adapt to, and how did you handle it?
How do you balance multiple priorities with competing deadlines?

Using This Question Bank

Organization Notes:

Questions 1-20: Teamwork & Collaboration
Questions 21-40: Leadership & Initiative
Questions 41-60: Problem-Solving & Critical Thinking
Questions 61-80: Communication & Interpersonal Skills
Questions 81-100: Adaptability & Resilience

Difficulty Levels:

Foundational (Good for first practice sessions): 1, 3, 5, 16, 18, 21, 26, 36, 41, 46, 56, 61, 66, 76, 81, 86, 96
Intermediate (Most questions fall here): 2, 4, 6-15, 17, 19-20, 22-25, 27-35, 37-40, 42-45, 47-55, 57-60, 62-65, 67-75, 77-80, 82-85, 87-95, 97-100
Advanced (Require deeper reflection): 28, 30, 50, 70, 89

Quick Drill Suggestions:

Session 1 (Getting Started): Questions 1, 16, 41, 61, 81

Session 2 (Building Confidence): Questions 21, 36, 56, 76, 96

Session 3 (Mixed Practice): Questions 5, 26, 46, 66, 86

Targeted Practice Suggestions:

Struggling with Teamwork? Practice questions 1-20

Need Leadership Examples? Practice questions 21-40

Weak Problem-Solving Stories? Practice questions 41-60

Communication Needs Work? Practice questions 61-80

Adaptability Challenges? Practice questions 81-100

Mock Interview Sequences:

Mock Interview #1 (Entry-Level Focus):

Question 61 (Explain something complex)

Question 1 (Worked on team)

Question 41 (Faced challenge)

Question 81 (Adapted to change)

Question 26 (Took initiative)

Question 76 (Written communication)

Question 96 (Handle stress)

Question 16 (Role on team)

Question 36 (Leadership style)

"Why are you interested in this position?"

"Where do you see yourself in five years?"

"Do you have any questions for me?"

Mock Interview #2 (More Challenging):

Question 62 (Communicated bad news)

Question 22 (Motivated others)

Question 44 (Analyzed data)

Question 2 (Difficult team member)

Question 87 (Multiple deadlines)

Question 70 (Received difficult feedback)

Question 28 (Mentored someone)

Question 50 (Convinced others of solution)

Question 89 (Bounced back from setback)

"What's your greatest weakness?"

"Why should we hire you?"

"Do you have any questions for me?"

Tips for Instructors

Customize for your students' industries: Add 10-20 industry-specific questions to this foundation (technical questions for STEM, case scenarios for business, portfolio questions for creative fields).

Update annually: Ask students to share questions they encountered in real interviews and add the most common ones to your bank.

Create themed practice sets: Bundle 5-7 questions around a single interview scenario (startup interview, corporate interview, non-profit interview) for more realistic practice.

Provide context: For each question, consider adding a note about what interviewers are really assessing so students understand the purpose behind the question.

Encourage variety: Remind students to practice across all five competency areas, not just their comfort zones.