



Total time
1 HOUR
45 min

Introduction

This unit is a natural extension of units 4 or 5. It encourages pupils to look carefully at the admissions process and understand the expectations that HEIs will have of them. This is a valuable group exercise which is a great way of getting pupils to focus on the application process, organise their thoughts for their personal statement and engage in some team work whilst improving their presentation skills. However this exercise is not a substitute for individual mock interviews and for pupils applying for courses where an interview is a prerequisite for entry, individual interviews and feedback are essential. Local universities may well be able to support you here by providing undergraduate mentors who can help with this.

Materials required

Each pupil needs a copy of a prospectus or outline details of a course they are interested in plus Pupil activity sheets 1 and 3 plus Pupil fact sheet 'Top tips for interview success'. Spare paper and pencils
Optional: a Video camera to record the interviews.

30 MINS

ACTIVITY 1 The admissions process

Put pupils into groups with broadly similar HE interests eg media, science, business, law, humanities, languages etc.

Discussion/ brainstorm: If you were an admission tutor what kind of students would you want on your course? What evidence of ability, reliability and enthusiasm would you demand? What would happen to your course if you did not get good students?

Give out the sheet 'Put yourself in their shoes'. Ask pupils to complete the whole chart – the left hand side can be completed as a group, the right hand side will require individual responses.

45 MINS

ACTIVITY 2 Drawing up a list of questions and practising answers

Each group should now draw up a list of approx five questions that they think an admission tutor in their subject area would be likely to ask. When they have drawn up the list, check that the questions are valid (substitute alternative questions where you think necessary.)

In reality few questions will be subject specific - it is the answers that need to be!

Example questions could be:

- why do you want to study this subject?
- why do you want to study at this university?
- which aspect of this subject really interests you?
- which issue in the news at the moment relates to your subject?

Remain in groups to practise answering these questions. Each group will be interviewed as a many headed person! As they will not know which of the groups' questions they will be asked it is important that all members of the group practise their answer to all of the prepared questions. They should listen to each others answers and give informal feedback. Obviously each person will answer any given question differently and that is fine so long as the group as a whole is happy with the quality of the answer given on their behalf.

30 MINS

ACTIVITY 3 Interviews and evaluation

Teacher to interview each group as a 'many headed person' for just one place on their course. Use the questions devised by each group. Other groups to act as audience and complete peer group evaluation checklists as they watch. Give feedback and discuss more general tips for interviews using top tips fact sheet.

A video camera may be used to record the interviews.





Research and preparation for an interview

ACTIVITY 1.



Put yourself in the shoes of the Admissions Tutor for the course you are interested in. What type of students do you want? Fill in some thoughts in the table below.

What would an admissions tutor want?



Qualifications

Evidence of Academic interests

Personal Qualities

Other experiences and skills

Be honest when completing this table below. Add targets and action points if needed.

How do I match up?

Qualifications

Evidence of Academic interests

Personal Qualities

Other experiences and skills

Research and preparation for an interview

ACTIVITY 3

Interview evaluation

Peer group evaluation

How effectively did interviewees demonstrate the skills, understanding and experiences required for this course?

Name of group and course applied for

Other comments

How did I do?	5 is highest and 1 is lowest score. Score whole group as one applicant
Evidence of enrichment experience in subject area outside school time	
Has an informed and realistic idea of what course involves	
Evidence of reading around the subject	
Demonstrates engagement with studies	
Appears calm and confident	
Expresses themselves clearly, uses appropriate language and technical vocabulary as needed.	
Shows enthusiasm for the subject	

Would you offer this 'person' a place?

STUDENTS NOTES

Top Tips for success in interviews

Preparation before the interview

- Read the prospectus.
- Read your personal statement.
- Anticipate the type of questions/topics you will cover in the interview.
- Practise answering questions. If you are going to have a practice interview, try to use a teacher and an environment that you don't know very well - that way you won't be too 'at home'.

Planning for the big day

- Plan your journey. Check in advance for transport disruptions and if you are unavoidably delayed ring ahead to let the university know.
- Plan to arrive early. Being late is rude or at the least, disorganised. Make sure that you are clear about which room/campus/ entrance you are expected at.
- Plan what to wear. The best rule to follow is to wear whatever you feel comfortable in. Casual clothes are fine.
- Plan to be alert. Get a good night's sleep the night before, have a good breakfast & drink plenty of water to make sure that you are wide awake and alert for your interview.

Performing at the interview

Relax

Interviewers expect you to be nervous and will try to help you to relax at the beginning of the interview. If being nervous makes you waffle you might benefit from a mock interview before hand.

Interviewers are not trying to make you feel ignorant or to catch you out. What they are looking for is how well you can explain what you do know and whether you can think your way through a new problem or argue your position.

Answer questions carefully

Don't rush into your answers. The tutor will be looking for how carefully you listen to questions and how sensibly you answer them. Concise and relevant arguments and clarity are all-important.

You should show self-motivation and enthusiasm for your subject, demonstrating that you are prepared to look outside your school syllabus. In addition you need to show that you are beginning to think independently and that you are willing to engage with new ideas. Show your grasp of current affairs and how topical issues relate to your subject

It is important that you demonstrate that you can think for yourself and that you are answering precisely the question you have been asked rather than repeating an answer you prepared earlier to a different question.

Show that you have read around the subject

One purpose of the interview is to assess your understanding of or potential for your subject, and to give you the opportunity of explaining why you are committed to studying it for at least three years. The basis for this discussion will usually be the subjects you are currently studying at school or college. However, you are also likely to be offered opportunities to show whether you read around the subject and whether you have a general interest in it outside your syllabus, Eg refer to exhibitions, conferences, galleries etc.

Try to smile and look confident!

