

Unit 7 - Skills Practice



The objectives for this unit are:

- reading: read a text about video interviews.
- writing: write a CV for a job application.

Unit 7 - Skills Practice - Reading

The following words and phrases appear in the text you are going to read in this section:

grill ask somebody a lot of questions, sometimes in an unpleasant way.
He was grilled by detectives for several hours.

ordeal a difficult or unpleasant experience
The interview was less of an ordeal than she expected.

pool a group of people
The pool of teachers available for state schools is shrinking.

disconcerting causing a feeling of anxiousness, confusion, or embarrassment.
The way she looked at e was very disconcerting.

pitfall a hidden difficulty or danger
Many people assume there are pitfalls to buying goods online.

branch out start an activity that you haven't done before, especially related to work or business.
The company is branching out into the smartphone sector.

cite mention something as an example or reason.
He cited the weather as the reason for his lateness.



Skype interviews: Is it trickier to be grilled by video?

The job interview is an ordeal that most people face at some stage in their career. But as video starts to take the place of the face-to-face interview, is it easier or harder now to land your dream job?

The job interview as we know it may never have existed if it wasn't for Thomas Edison. Frustrated with hiring college graduates who lacked the right knowledge, Edison devised the first employment questionnaire to narrow down his applicant pool. The test was thought to be so difficult that in 1921 the New York Times claimed only a 'walking encyclopaedia' could pass it. Questions included: 'What is the weight of air in a room 20ft x 30ft x 10ft?' and 'Where are condors to be found?'

But today the trick to making a good impression at interview may be less about what you know and more about how you come across on camera. Jean Luc, a 30-year-old marketing professional from Greenwich, recently had his first video interview for a role at a web start-up company based in Berlin.

'I had the usual nerves before my interview. But I Skype all the time as my parents live in South Africa so it felt like a much more familiar process. What I found quite disconcerting was when I first turned on the video, my interviewer had his camera turned off. It would have been awkward if I turned my camera off and on again, so I just went through the interview with a black screen. It was a bit like talking to myself.'

Looking in the wrong place is just one of the common pitfalls of video interviews, says New York-based career coach and blogger Megan Broussard. 'It's tempting to watch yourself in that little box to make sure your hair isn't in your face or that you're not making weird facial expressions. But the truth is that it's very distracting to the other party and can come across as shy and even insincere – two qualities both employers and new hires want to avoid. It's OK to watch the speaker on the screen, but always respond by looking into the camera to create the illusion of direct eye contact.'

In the US, more than six out of ten HR managers now use video to interview job applicants, according to a survey. A growing number of UK firms are adopting a similar approach, says Claire McCartney, from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD).

'Video interviewing is becoming an attractive option as organizations branch out overseas,' says McCartney.

As well as live interviewing on services like Skype, some firms are giving video 'questionnaires' for candidates to record. The UK company, Webrecruit, reports a steady increase in the use of automated video interviewing over the past few years. Employers can view recorded responses from candidates in their own time.

'Clients will input their questions, then the candidate receives an automated email inviting them to sit the interview,' explains Webrecruit's Leona Matson. 'The interviewee can then sit the interview within an allocated time frame, the answers are recorded, and then the client can view it at a time that suits them.'

As hiring becomes more global for candidates and employers, video interviews can be much more cost-effective. In 2012 employers in the UK spent an average of 10 working days interviewing, 16% of the working week travelling to meet candidates and £3,286 reimbursing candidates' travel expenses, according to a survey carried out by

Camio, a Dutch company specialising in online video services.

'The significant drain on time and resources companies face when scheduling and carrying out interviews means for many it can be an expensive and time-consuming task,' says Matson.

For large firms with international graduate schemes, the savings can be significant. Sellafield's graduate scheme cited cost savings of £14,000 using video technology to screen interview candidates. The European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) also reports cutting recruitment costs by 20% using automated video assessments for first-round interviews.

'You can definitely gain a better first impression of candidates using a combination of video and CV rather than with CV only,' says Walter Hueber, chief executive of Camio. 'It's much more visual and allows you to get a broader assessment of the candidate.'

But does the technology give the younger generation an unfair advantage?

'It can take some getting used to,' says Peter Russell of VuCall, a

company offering video consultations based in London. 'When we started three years ago, it took some time for people in a business context to feel comfortable seeing themselves on screen. After a while though, they just got used to it and learned to relax.'

Jean Luc says he would prefer to do all his interviews via video in future, to avoid unnecessary anxiety. 'This way you avoid the pressure of getting to the interview on time, getting stuck in traffic, or worrying so much about what to wear. I felt much more at ease interviewing at home and I was able to think more clearly before responding.'

That might all be well for Jean Luc to wish for, but whether or not he gets a video interview in the future may depend more on what jobs he actually goes after. Mike Parker, of business communication consultancy Pitchcoach, thinks that for certain jobs and sectors face-to-face interviews and direct contact will always be necessary. 'I suspect that for senior jobs face-to-face will continue. You can't see the handshake. You can't see how they walk into the room.'

The answers to Thomas Edison's questions:

Where are condors to be found?

The condor is a large bird like a vulture. Andean condors can be found in South America in the Andes and near the coasts and deserts – places with strong air currents. Californian condors can be found in southern California and Arizona.

What is the weight of air in a room 20ft x 30ft x 10ft?

The weight of the air is the volume of the room multiplied by air density.

$$20 \times 30 \times 10 = 6,000 \text{ cubic feet}$$

Air density is approximately 0.08 pounds per cubic foot so:

$$6000 \times 0.08 = 480 \text{ pounds (218kg)}$$

Skype interviews: Read the text and answer the questions I

Read the text and choose the correct answers.

The text is about...

- A. job interviews in the marketing sector.
- B. online job interviews.
- C. the cost of job interviews.
- D. Thomas Edison inventing the job interview.

Jean Luc thinks that video interviews are...

- A. awkward
- B. cheap
- C. disconcerting
- D. less stressful than face-to-face interviews

What is the worst thing you can do during a video interview?

- A. Look at the camera.
- B. Look at the interviewer on the screen.
- C. Look at yourself on screen.
- D. Look relaxed.

Video 'questionnaires' have the advantage that companies can...

- A. ask many more questions.
- B. increase the number of interviews they do.
- C. outsource all their recruitment needs.
- D. watch the answers whenever they want.

Businesses like video interviews because they ...

- A. cut costs.
- B. favour the younger generation.
- C. generate income.
- D. take longer.

Whether or not you are offered a video interview may depend on ...

- A. how comfortable you are with technology.
- B. how you walk.
- C. the type of job you apply for.
- D. your age.

Skype interviews: Read the text and answer the questions II

Read the text again and choose the correct endings to complete the sentences.

Megan Broussard thinks...	Traditional interviewing is expensive and takes a long time.
Clair McCartney thinks...	You should practise how to use the camera.
Leona Matson thinks...	Traditional interviews still have their place.
Walter Hueber thinks...	Video interviewing is useful for growing companies.
Peter Russell thinks...	Videos can complement curriculum vitae.
Mike Parker thinks...	It takes time for people to feel comfortable with video.

Unit 7 - Skills Practice - Writing

The following words and phrases appear in this section:

CV/curriculum vitae (BrE) resume (AmE) a written record of your employment and education that you send when you apply for a job

Send a CV and covering letter to the following address...

numeracy the ability to understand and work with numbers.

Standards of literacy and numeracy are falling.

first -rate excellent, of the highest quality

The customer service is absolutely first-rate.

Single-handedly done on your own with nobody helping you

She single-handedly wrote the presentation, the report, and the prospectus.

CVs: Match the sections to their headings

Read the job advert and CV and choose the correct heading for each section.

Greenacre Babywear Retail Administrator

Greenacre is looking for an energetic and efficient Retail Administrator to maximize sales through effective management of stock – making certain that there is consistently the required level of stock availability. Applicants must be highly organized, numerate, and have experience with stock control systems and Excel.

Ref: GJT 03

To apply, please send your CV and covering letter to Janet Turner, Greenacre Babywear, 4 Broad Street, Reading, RG1 7FT.

Georgina Adams

45 Western Avenue
Reading RG5 8YY
Email: g.adams@edc.com
Telephone: 07799 456 987

1. _____

I am an accurate, organized, and reliable fashion sales assistant, accustomed to working in teams. My experience of stock control systems, proficiency with a variety of software and first-rate numeracy has provided me with excellent abilities for maximizing sales.

2. _____

- Excellent people skills – dealing with a wide variety of people under stressful circumstances.
- Highly flexible – having worked in a number of different sectors.
- First-rate problem solver – able to analyse efficiently and react quickly to difficulties.

3. _____

Mambo Fashion

Oct 2011 to date

- Sales assistant with responsibilities for new trainees. Increased sales in Menswear by 9% during last year.
- Stock control – single-handedly managing stock levels for 280 m² Menswear department. Implemented software conversion from Inventorium to Inflow Inventory.
- Window design – won best-dressed window 2013 in Reading SmartShop design competition.

Ftk UK

Jan 2008 to Sept 2011

- Sales assistant – won best customer service award three times.

- Stock control of Menswear section. Introduced regular summer-wear promotions.
- Assistant window designer – working in a team of four people. Achieved faster turn-around times for weekly window dressing.

Hebrum Foods, PLC

Apr 2006 to Nov 2007

- Financial assistant – in Sales Department, dealt with payments, control of supplies and promotions.
- Customer service assistant – helped to maximize sales by improving client-company relationship.

4. _____

- GCSE Mathematics - grade A, English - grade B, Physics - grade C, Computer Studies - grade A, Design - grade B, Higher National Diploma in Business Studies, National Diploma in Sports Studies, Inflow training program – pass with distinction.

5. _____

- Microsoft Office Suite, Mac OSX, Windows 7, Inflow Inventory, Inventorium, and Stocksoft.
- Clean driving licence.
- English – native speaker, currently learning Portuguese.

References on request

1 Section 1	OTHER SKILLS
2 Section 2	EDUCATION
3 Section 3	EXPERIENCE
4 Section 4	PROFILE
5 Section 5	KEY SKILLS

CVs: Complete the phrases

Choose the correct endings to make phrases from the CV.

1 Accurate,	software conversion
2 Excellent	flexible
3 Highly	people skills
4 First-rate	driving license
5 Single-handedly	problem solver
6 Implemented	faster turn-around times
7 Achieved	to date
8 Oct 2011	managing stock levels
9 Clean	organized, and reliable
10 References	on request

DPY Media – Advertising Sales Executive

Renowned business-to-business media company requires ambitious, results-driven Advertising Sales Executive to expand our client base and build on existing relationships with key clients. Educated to degree level, you will have a proven track record in advertising sales and excellent negotiation skills.

To apply, please send your CV and covering letter to Robert Akers, DPY Media, 101 Rushey Way, London, W5 6NQ.

CV: Practice

You have seen the following job advert in a national newspaper. Write a CV to apply for the position using the phrases you have learnt in this section.