

Teacher Interview Questions

with example responses

Personal Questions

1. Tell us a little bit about yourself.

I'm a graduate of the University of Texas at Austin with a major in Advertising, but with my deep love of learning and level of compassion, I always knew I'd be a teacher. So, I got certified alternatively and started my teaching career shortly after at the high school level. In fact, my very first classroom as a full time teacher was the same one my mother retired out of the year prior after 31 years of teaching. My favorite thing to be is creative, which I can certainly do in the classroom, but outside the classroom I love to bake and decorate sugar cookies. In fact, I've incorporated baking into some of my lesson plans with my students to reinforce concepts from fractions to the importance of reading directions, so it's fun when I get to combine those worlds.

2. Why teaching?

I like to soak up knowledge in every aspect of life and apply what I've learned in creative ways whatever the context may be. To be able to share those experiences with the growing minds of students and be there when light bulbs go off in their young brains is so incredibly rewarding. It's one of the best parts of teaching and my "why" in this question. The best place I know to combine those passions of learning and creating together on a consistent basis is in the classroom. We get to go on so many different adventures together and build strong relationships along the way.

3. Describe a strength and weakness you have.

My strong work ethic always pushes me to succeed and accomplish personal goals inside and outside of the classroom, and my creativity keeps things interesting and fun throughout that process. I love being challenged to make something out of nothing whether it's with physical materials or just an idea or concept given to me. A road block that sometimes gets in the way would be my worrisome nature. I do tend to worry about small things, but I channel it well and use it as fuel to my fire in productivity.

4. How would prior colleagues describe you?

They would probably highlight my work ethic, attention to detail, heart for students, and creativity as assets in the classroom. I don't always have the answers, but I'm dedicated to finding them through whatever research is needed to accomplish any given task. Additionally, I know how to work well individually or as part of a team as needed.

5. What is your teaching philosophy?

If you provide a safe, fair, engaging learning environment and build strong relationships with students by supporting, encouraging, mentoring, challenging, and celebrating achievements, a high level of learning and devotion will develop for a classroom family.

Teaching Method Questions

1. How do you build rapport with students?

I think this is THE most important thing a teacher can do. A teacher who develops a good relationship with their students and makes it a point to build on that throughout the year is more likely to have a successful classroom management experience and more learning happening overall. It's like all of the other "things" fall into place if a strong rapport is present between teacher and students. Spending time at the beginning of the year to get to know your students, and vice versa, is vital. However, it shouldn't stop there. Continuing to ask about their soccer games, swim meets, art projects, family trips, noticing when something seems off about them, etc, means the world to kids. It shows that you are not just there for the ABC's and 123's. Your support, care, and interest in them goes much deeper than the walls of a classroom. Show up for them, compliment them, give positive reinforcement, and support them beyond the academic subject area you teach, and so much magic can happen throughout the year.

2. How do you cater to different learning styles?

What works for one child may not work for another, so it's important to differentiate lessons in the classroom and present the students with choice. Giving them choice boards over a certain concept, for example, allows them to pick which way their brain absorbs the information best. In addition, implementing hands-on activities where students can learn by doing is something you will always find in my classroom.

3. What are your classroom management action plans?

In my opinion, the key to having your classroom run like a well-oiled machine vastly depends on two things: relationship building and remaining consistent and fair. I spend several days at the beginning of the year with a focus on getting to know my students, and I want them to get to know me. Of course, it's not a fool proof method, but if the students know that I care for, support, and respect them as individuals, they are likely to return the sentiment and want to put in work for me. Also, setting up and enforcing consistent routines and rules and being 100% fair in executing them communicates clear expectations in how we will treat each other.

4. Can you describe to us any lesson plan of your choice?

*Answers here will immensely vary. If you have taught before, pull one of your successful, engaging lessons and provide its learning targets, handouts, example work, etc. If you haven't taught before, put together an example lesson you might teach in a classroom so the interviewers can have an idea of how you organize, plan, and execute.

5. How would you handle a disruptive student?

I think what's most important is finding the root problem of the behavior. Pulling the student aside and speaking to them with a supportive tone rather than in an accusatory manner is paramount. Allowing them the floor to explain their behavior gives them a voice in coming up with a solution that will work for everyone involved. For example, I had a student who sat near the back of the classroom, and I would find him off task often, disrupting the students around him. I pulled him aside and found that he was having trouble seeing the instruction clearly on the screen when I was teaching, so he got bored very easily. Together, we developed a plan to move him closer to the board and hold up a hand signal if he was having further trouble seeing instruction. Of course, I sent a note home to his parents discussing his vision issues in case they hadn't noticed the problem.

6. How do you plan to stay connected with parents?

Keeping an open line of communication with parents is vital since we are in a partnership together for the school year. At the beginning of the year, I would encourage parents to write me a short letter describing anything (or everything) they wish to tell me about their child. This will give me tremendous insight into not only how best to serve the student, but a glimpse into their family dynamics as well. I think this lets parents know that I have a goal to build a strong relationship with them and their child throughout the year as we learn and grow together. In addition, I plan to keep them involved in their child's learning by sharing met goals, class concepts, any concerns that arise, and other class "happenings" in regular emails/notes home.

7. How do you plan to track student progress?

It is so important to meet a student where they are in the learning process and adapt your lessons in ways they learn best as individuals. Setting academic goals through student data tracking binders can help keep them focused and excited to see personal growth throughout the year. In this binder, a student and teacher can work together to record scores/grades in given time periods and decide on individual action plans. A growth mindset will be encouraged through this process, and it's important to celebrate every milestone with students as they accomplish goals in their data binders. (*I would have an example of a data tracking sheet in a binder you've used before. Bring an example of however you plan to track student progress.)
