



Guidelines and tips to prepare to volunteer for Mock Interviews

Step Up Expectations

YOUR DEVICE & INTERVIEW SPACE

Set up a workstation to be able to comfortably have 3-5 consecutive conversations with young people. Have your camera on and your device sitting still. If you have headphones, test to ensure that the audio input and outputs are working. Have water nearby!

YOUR APPROACH

Be friendly and welcoming! Have grace and patience with the young people you are working with! They are extending their trust to Step Up and our volunteers as they connect with you from their homes. Please anticipate interruptions, distractions, background noise and that our young participants may be shy or nervous. Some may not have their cameras turned on. Though Step Up has requested and encouraged camera use, we know our students have legitimate reasons that might deter them from following through on this request. Please invite them to turn on their camera if it is off, but do not require it to move forward in the interview.

CONNECTING & COMMUNICATING

These are some best practices for English Language Learners that you can apply broadly for all the young people we work with.

- DO: Listen actively. If there seems to be miscommunication, you can ask if they understand and/or attempt to rephrase your question or statement.
- DO: Use your body language and appropriate visual cues to help with understanding. Act things out or use gestures if a language barrier exists.
- DO: Speak with a normal rhythm at a slightly slower pace.
- DO: Use simple phrases and words.
- DO: Use the questions provided or rephrase them to promote understanding.
- DO NOT: Raise your voice or talk abnormally slowly, especially with English Learners.
- DO NOT: Ask only yes/no questions
- DO NOT: Use idioms or jargon, or switch word use if an English Learner seems to understand the first choice. For example, if you start talking about a “job” do not switch to saying “position” or “internship” or another term. Instead, stick to “job.”

STRUCTURING YOUR TIME

Interviews are quick, occurring in 10-minute rounds. Plan for 8 minutes of interviewing and 2 minutes for providing constructive, positive feedback. Please use the mock interview feedback guide to take notes during your interview and to guide the conversation after the interview. If you need assistance during the interview you can call a Step Up staff member to your room by using the “ask for help” button (look for ? icon) at the bottom of your Zoom toolbar.