

Sample Interview Question Bank

- **Please Note: An 'S' next to a question indicates that it is scenario-based.**
- **In some instances, a question may present evidence of multiple interview criteria. In those cases, additional criteria are listed in parentheses at the end of the question.**

INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

	Why are you interested in teaching in a high-need school?
	What do you think are the benefits or advantages of working with a population of students with experiences different from your own? Are there disadvantages or obstacles?
	Reflect on a time when you had to acclimate to a new environment or experience. What challenges did you face? How did you overcome these challenges? What did you learn from the experience?

TEACHING ABILITY

- Demonstrates appropriate knowledge of pedagogy and content
- Is able to make instructional adjustments for different students
- Focuses on the academic success of students
- Reflects on and improves successful and unsuccessful lessons

General:

	How will you measure your own success as a teacher? What kind of impact do you want to have in a year? Have you had this kind of impact yet in your (student) teaching experiences?
S	Imagine you have been teaching for one month and feel that your students are no better off than they were when you first arrived. What would you do? After two months, when a third of your students are still no better off? After winter break, when a handful of students are still no better off?
	Tell me about a time where you recognized a problem or a challenge within your classroom and then did something about it.
	How might you handle a student who is consistently struggling with and expressing hatred for the subject you're teaching?

Content mastery:

	<p>Tell me about a specific lesson you felt you were really successful at.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What was the objective? ○ What were the activities/how did you teach the lesson? ○ How do you know it was so successful? ○ What you do differently if you had to teach it again? ○ Why was that lesson important?
	Tell me about a lesson that didn't go so well. Why did it fail? What would you do differently if you had to teach it again?
	What has prepared you to be a(n) <i>[subject]</i> teacher?

	How would you teach [your subject]? How do you make it meaningful?
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Instructional design and strategies:

	In the lesson we just discussed (or another), what were the goals? How did you determine the goals? What role (if any) did standards play?
	Short and long term goals/plans
	How do you plan? How do you approach long-term planning? How about short-term planning?
S	Imagine you are teaching a class where a handful of students are performing at or above grade level, but the rest of your students are performing far below grade level. How would you plan your lessons so that you are meeting the needs of all of the students in your class?
	How do you know that your students mastered the objective? What do you do if they didn't?
S	Imagine that you're teaching a lesson about X, tell me 3 different ways you would assess whether your students learned the concept.
	How do assessments fit into your overall lesson planning?
	How do you know if you were successful at the end of the year? What's another way? How else do you know?
	How can you/do you help students who aren't achieving? How are you going to meet the needs of Special Ed/ELL/ESL students?

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

	What are your classroom procedures - what happens in the first or last 15 minutes of class? What happens when the students don't follow these procedures?
S	You have a student who is continually disrupting class. Sometimes it's just her, other times, she involves other students in the disruption. What do you do? If that doesn't work? What do you think is causing it? How might you draw on external resources?
	If you were having a classroom management problem, at what point would you want to involve the principal?
	How would you describe your classroom management style?
S	If a student were to communicate inappropriately with you (i.e. curses), how would you respond? What if this behavior persisted? When would you involve the parents? When do you involve me?
S	What would you do if only half of your first period class showed up to school on time on an average day?
	What are your rules?
S	What will you do if 10 students always follow the rules and procedures and the other 20 don't?

	What might you do (as a first year teacher) if you were having classroom management problems and your mentor wasn't available to help you?
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SCHOOL FIT

Management

	How often do you expect to be observed/receive feedback on your teaching?
	How can I, as the principal, best support you as a teacher?
	Think about a time when you were given advice by a superior or co-worker in the past. How did you feel about someone criticizing work that you had put a lot of energy into? What was your response? How did you handle the advice you were given?
	What kind of management do you work best under?
	Think about your last performance review. What areas did your supervisor highlight for improvement? Do you agree or disagree? What areas do you think you need improvement in? Did you do anything specific to address these issues?

Collegial environment

S	You are teaching middle school. Students move from one classroom to another each period during the day for classes in different content areas. Each day, the teacher who drops off your last class of the day arrives at least 10 minutes late, and the lost time is causing that class to fall behind the others. Once before, you have politely asked the teacher to deliver the students on-time. The teacher replied that his classroom is all the way across the school and he often has a difficult time getting the class into an orderly line. The class continues to be late. How would you approach a conversation with this teacher about getting the class to your room on-time? When would you involve the principal?
	What do you find most frustrating in working with other people? What do they find most frustrating about you?
	What kind of teachers do you work best with?
	What kind of teachers are you challenged by?

Classroom Environment

	If I walked into your classroom and you were in the midst of a successful lesson, what would I see?
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Parent/community

S	<i>Role-play:</i> One of your seventh grade students, Jeremy, has been a persistent behavior disruption in class. You have observed him taking things from other students, calling you names when you are turned to the chalkboard, etc. In several instances, you have disciplined Jeremy by giving him lunch detention and separating his desk from other students. He has not improved. Today, his mother is at school because Jeremy has told
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	her that you have been picking on him and separating him from the rest of the class for no reason and she is very upset. How would you approach a conversation with his mother at that time? What kind of tone are you trying to convey?
	What about your background makes you more/less likely to fit into this community?
S	How would you handle a parent who stormed into your room during class and accused you of picking on and being biased against his/her child?
	Do you prefer parents who are overly involved or not involved at all if you had to choose?

Subject/grade level

	What grades/subjects do you feel most comfortable with and why?
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School particulars

	Our school has/is...is open space...has block scheduling...has an elongated day...etc.) Gauge candidate reaction and follow up w/ appropriate questions.
	At my school, we have... (describe the population - special ed, ESL, mild learning disabilities) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ask them to define more specifically what you think this will be like/involve and why you want to do it. ▪ What in your previous experience has prepared you for working with this population? ▪ What challenges do you expect to encounter in working with this population? ▪ How would you customize a lesson to fit the specific needs of our school population?

Other contributions

	What else do you bring that could contribute to our school community?
	If you had to start an after-school club, what would it be?

CRITICAL THINKING

- All interview questions are opportunities for candidates to demonstrate critical thinking/communication skills.

ACHIEVEMENT

	Tell me about a situation where you recognized a problem or a challenge and then did something about it
	Tell me about a time when you balanced more than one responsibility at a time. What difficulties did you encounter? What did you learn from the experience, and what would you do differently if you had the chance?

S	It is the first day of school, and you go to your classroom and find that you have no books. What would you do? And then what? And if after a month, there were still no books, what would you do then? (Personal Responsibility) (Commitment)
	Would you say that you have succeeded at your prior jobs? If so, how? What is an example of a great contribution you have made at your previous jobs that can't be shown on a resume?
	Thinking back over your education (for recent graduates) or most recent job (for experienced teachers), what are you most proud of? How could you have gotten more out of the experience? Why are you proud of this accomplishment? How did you ensure you were successful? (Personal Responsibility)
	Should all students be held to the same standards as highest-performing students in the class?
	Should students in schools in impoverished areas be held to the same standards as students in wealthier areas?

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

	There are obviously many factors that will determine whether you succeed in raising the achievement of your future students. What portion or percentage of the weight rests directly on you as a teacher? Why? How are you going to do it?
	Tell me about a time where you were incredibly busy and had to manage multiple responsibilities. How did you manage it? Is there anything you felt slipped through the cracks or didn't get done?
S	(For teachers on alternative licenses) As a new teacher, you will be working full time and be taking classes to receive your license. What will you do if you find yourself slipping behind in your coursework?

COMMITMENT

	What challenges do you think you might face in SFUSD that you wouldn't face in other schools?
S	How might you handle a student who is consistently struggling with and expressing hatred for the subject you're teaching? (Personal Responsibility)
	What do you find appealing about working in an urban, high-need school?
	What does it mean to be a good teacher? How might I see that in your classroom (<i>push for more than 3 ways</i>)? (Achievement)

	Do you believe that students of all backgrounds have the potential to achieve academically?
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PROFESSIONAL INTERACTION	
S	How would you handle a parent who stormed into your room during class and accused you of picking on and being biased against his/her child?
	What do you find most frustrating in working with other people? What do you think they might say is frustrating about working with you?
	What do you think are the benefits or advantages of working with a population of students with experiences different from your own? Are there disadvantages or obstacles?
S	What would you do if you disagreed with the classroom management technique prescribed by your principal?

CONSTANT LEARNING	
S	What would you do if you were a teacher and your mentor wasn't available to help you?
	Think about a time when you were given advice by a superior or co-worker in the past. How did you feel about someone criticizing work that you had put a lot of energy into? What was your response? How did you handle the advice you were given?