

Some golden rules when it comes to an interview:

Tips should you be taking an online interview:

- Please make sure you are online a few minutes before the scheduled interview time and make sure your status is 'online'
- You will be nervous so have a glass of water nearby as your throat will get very dry (that's Biology)
- It is important to come across as confident and enthusiastic – this is absolutely key as the school already knows you can do the job but they are using this interview to check your personality and your level of enthusiasm about potentially joining their school.
- Make sure your speakers are working and that you are comfortable with making and receiving a video call
- It is VERY important that the lighting is good for an online interview: if you are near a window sit facing the window so that the light falls on your face, put any lights on and make sure there are no shadows on your face.
- Please remember that the person interviewing you can see you so make sure that you are dressed appropriately, that there is (preferably) a blank wall behind you and that you will not be interrupted during the interview
- Keep your mobile with you, but on SILENT so that should the connection be problematic, the school can call you on your mobile to continue the interview.
- Have a pen and paper handy so that you can make notes if necessary, and if you are given the opportunity to ask questions these should be readily available to you.
- Make sure that you do not refer to notes too often during this interview – you cannot read them a prepared answered (remember they can see you) but you can always have a few notes or “post its” stuck around the computer you are using as points of reference if you wish to.

It is important to have a few questions ready should the opportunity arise – questions related to number of pupils in the class/what subjects and age groups does the school potentially have in mind for you/how many other teachers in the grade or subject are good questions to have ready.

The schools may start the interview **with a few 'ice breakers'** to get the interview going, so you should be prepared to talk about yourself...a) your family b) why did you become a teacher c) why the move abroad (here it is absolutely fine to talk about the travel, different teaching environments, experience and money) d) what do you hope to achieve in your professional life by teaching abroad.

Here are some questions you might be asked at the interview – you MUST work through these before taking your interview.

THE MOST IMPORTANT ADVICE: as mentioned above, please understand that the schools already “like” you on paper and feel you are qualified to do the job – they now need to get a feel for you as a teacher in the classroom. So, you need to prepare a **lesson plan of 1 or 2 lessons** that you can share with them either as answer to a direct question (“please explain to us about a lesson plan or lesson you have recently taught”) OR questions about how you teach (“what is your teaching style/what is your best teaching practise/how do you plan the various components of your lessons”).

The lesson plans you prepare must include the following (remember to use examples):

- The outcome/learning objective
- That content you need to teach

- What technology/visual aids will you use
- Your awareness of the different ability levels and learning styles present in your class (differentiation)
- Your introduction, body and conclusion
- Classwork/group work activities
- Assessment (on-going, graded etc.)
- How you interact with the students in the class

The content is not the most important aspect here, it is more important that you show an awareness of these steps, you are organised, you are enthusiastic and your teaching style is varied and modern in relation to the different ability levels and teaching styles in your class. DO NOT spend hours researching the particular curriculum of the school interviewing you and try to align your content accordingly; it is far more important to choose content you are 100% comfortable with so that you can talk with confidence and be able to 'tweak' where necessary in answering their questions.

Once you have your 2 lessons prepared you will be able to answer pretty much any questions that come your way – you will not need to have a different lesson plan to answer questions related to behaviour, assessment, teaching style etc. – draw on your prepared lessons to answer these questions and simply 'flesh out' the particular aspect they wish to discuss.

Share with me your experience in implementing differentiation (teaching learners with different learning abilities in one classroom) in the classroom (working with gifted/SEN/low ability students)

The word DIFFERENTIATION is not commonly used in South Africa, but it is very familiar throughout the world. South African teachers tend to practise differentiation as part of their daily duties WITHOUT realising this is what they are doing.....you MUST understand the concept of differentiation when preparing for an interview.

What it means is that in your classroom you have learners with different ability levels in the various subjects you teach and that this determines your planning, teaching style, how your classroom is set up, you make use of visual aides to assist your teaching, you use group work and co-operative learning effectively, classwork is structured and planned with definite time limits and graded outcomes and this all determines the pace at which you work with your class.

You also realise and understand that the learners in your classes have different learning styles – kinetic, visual, auditory etc. and you try to differentiate your teaching style towards these various learning styles (what the school wants to hear is that you know what the word differentiation means and also how you account for this in your classroom) To create a differentiated lesson plan, teachers must prepare different methods of delivery and activities that will take place within the classroom simultaneously

Tell me about your experiences working with second language learners.

One must be aware of this and adjust your teaching style and planning accordingly. Extra time and work must be done with pupils that are really struggling. Ensure all questions and instructions are explained in simple terms to avoid these pupils becoming frustrated (could result in bad behaviour). Make effective use of teaching assistants or language experts if they are available.

Again, use any examples you might have to illustrate your answer. If you are not a mother tongue English speaker DO NOT state that because of this you can relate to these pupils etc. you may say that you have experience teaching these pupils at the moment BUT NO MORE!

Share with me your classroom management methods (discipline).

Do you have classroom rules? Positive encouragement and reinforcement is important. Star charts, reward charts, special privileges etc. Do you deal with children's problems in the class immediately? You have the confidence to implement sanctions (consequences) if there is bad behaviour as the children know the consequences. You involve parents where appropriate – but follow the school's policy.

It is important that your methods are positive to encourage good behaviour but balanced with boundaries that the children understand and respect.

This question might also be asked in the form of a scenario..." how would you deal with ??????"

How do you cater for different intelligences in the classroom – (auditory/kinaesthetic/visual)

Teachers must provide content in a variety of ways, allowing for students to determine which way of learning works best for them, to see how other children learn and adapting to other learning styles as they progress. As the teacher, you are not going to be able to reach all styles, but you must employ a variety of methods and tactics in the classroom and in assessment methods...use non-traditional assessment strategies. Create a positive learning environment.

Use strategies that will focus on listening skills, colour, cementing work through writing, physical teaching etc.

Technology in the classroom

SMARTboards, interactive white boards, Microsoft Teams, Zoom – international schools make great use of technology and they will want to know if you are confident or experienced in these.

During the Pandemic, this has become a KEY QUESTION: be prepared to talk about how you adjusted to online learning platforms.

You must be able to talk about the online platforms you are comfortable working with, some of the challenges (and rewards) of going online and also how you have overcome some of these challenges.

If you do not have access to this kind of technology at your current school – so some reading but you must then share with the interviewer that this is the case but that you are 100% prepared and willing to learn how to use these.

Science and Technology for Foundation Phase teachers

In South Africa you will know the Science and Technology as content you are currently teaching in LIFESKILLS – think planet lesson, how to grow a plant etc.

Internationally, these are stand-alone subjects so as much as you need to have a Maths and English lesson prepared, don't be thrown if a Science/Technology question ("give us an idea of a Science lesson you have taught) comes your way.

Maths concepts in Foundation Phase

We know that you will have your Maths lesson plan ready to go, but be prepared to answer quick questions based on introducing maths concepts to your class...e.g. how would you introduce the concept of addition to your class – this doesn't necessarily require an entire lesson plan but if you have a lesson prepared on addition then great, fire away! If your chosen Maths lesson plan is on Time, for example, don't panic – you should be able to give a short description of how you introduced this concept to your class.

A typical teaching day in South Africa

This is quite a common question as international schools are quite interested in how schools in SA work and also the key concepts and framework of our curriculum.

The type of planning that is done, assessment, the daily routine, teacher responsibilities, subject content and the different age groups in South Africa are all questions you should be prepared to answer.

How teachers in SA manage teacher-parent communications and relationships within the school's framework is also a popular question to ask as is whether you have worked with a classroom assistant before.

Adaptability to an international teaching location/school

You might often find the schools wish to talk about the life/and challenges of adapting and adjusting to a new international teaching environment. They may ask about how you feel you will cope – have you done any research on life in the relevant country (and yes you should have done this research), and how your personality will aid in your settling in.

To have a successful interview, you must be able to elaborate on your answers by giving relevant and detailed examples. Give them as many examples as you can to enhance the answers you give. REMEMBER, all they have to go on is your black-and-white CV. You need to be able to colour in the bits that make you a great teacher by providing them with examples of how you teach as your CV will not have this.