Lesson 3

Most Common Interview Questions

For ESL, ELT, IELTS, Voice & Accent and teacher-training roles.

10–20 minute practical lesson

Takeaway: 12 prepared answers + one structure for confident responses.



What this lesson will help you do

Purpose: Move from “I hope they ask easy questions” to “I have prepared evidence”.

1 Recognise question types

Understand what interviewers are really testing: teaching skill, judgement, safety and professionalism.

2 Prepare strong answers

Use STAR and teaching-specific answer frames so your responses are clear, concrete and not memorised.

3 Practise the must-prepares

Build answers for the 10–12 questions that appear again and again in ESL/ELT interviews.

An interview is not a test of perfect English. It is a test of teaching judgement.

What interviewers are listening for

Purpose: Know the hidden purpose behind the question before you answer.

Clarity	Can you explain teaching ideas simply?
Method	Do you plan lessons with structure and purpose?
Learner focus	Do you adapt to real students, not imaginary perfect students?
Classroom judgement	Can you keep the room safe, respectful and productive?
Language awareness	Can you analyse meaning, form, pronunciation and use?
Professionalism	Do you reflect, improve and work with others?

Good answers combine principle + example + result.

Two answer structures to use

Purpose: Do not memorise long scripts. Use frames that keep you focused.

STAR for behaviour questions

S	**Situation**	What was happening?
T	**Task**	What did you need to achieve?
A	**Action**	What did you do?
R	**Result**	What improved or what did you learn?

Teaching answer frame

- Name the teaching principle.
- Explain the classroom action.
- Give a short example.
- Show learner benefit.

Use this for lesson planning, language analysis, error correction and classroom management questions.

The 12 must-prepare questions

Purpose: Prepare these before any ESL/ELT interview.

01 **Tell me about yourself.**
identity + fit

02 **Why this role / organisation?**
motivation

03 **Talk us through a lesson plan.**
structure

04 **How do you analyse language?**
MFP + use

05 **How would you teach this point?**
strategy

06 **How do you prepare a demo lesson?**
planning

07 **Mixed-ability class?**
differentiation

08 **Disruptive or angry learner?**
management

09 **How do you correct errors?**
feedback

10 **Quiet or low-confidence learners?**
motivation

11 **Online class problem?**
adaptability

12 **What makes you different?**
value

Prepare in bullets first. Then practise aloud until it sounds natural.

Questions 1–2: introduce yourself and motivation

Purpose: Open with focus. Do not narrate your entire life story.

Q1: Tell me about yourself

- Current professional identity
- Relevant training/certification
- Teaching strengths or learner group
- One proof point
- What you are looking for now

Q2: Why this role?

- Mention the role honestly
- Connect to learner needs
- Show you understand the organization
- Link your skills to the job description
- End with contribution, not need

Strong opening = who you are + what you can teach + why this role makes sense.

Question 3: Talk us through a lesson plan

Purpose: Show that you can design a lesson with progression, not random activities.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Aim	**Lead-in**	**Context**	**Teach / clarify**	**Controlled practice**	**Freer practice**	**Feedback**
What should learners do by the end?	Warm up context and interest.	Create meaning before language work.	Meaning, form, pronunciation and use.	Accuracy with support.	Fluency and personalisation.	Correct, praise and consolidate.

Interview line: “I start from the lesson aim and choose each stage because it moves learners towards that aim.”

Question 4: How do you analyse language?

Purpose: Use a clear checklist so your answer sounds trained and practical.

Meaning

What does it communicate?

Form

What is the structure?

Pronunciation

Stress, sounds, linking, intonation.

Use

When is it natural or appropriate?

Problems

What might learners confuse?

Practice

How will learners use it?

Sample answer start: “Before teaching a language point, I analyse meaning, form, pronunciation and likely learner problems, then I choose practice that checks real use.”

Questions 5–6: teaching strategy and demo lesson

Purpose: Show how you make choices, not just that you can perform.

Q5: How would you teach this?

- Identify the aim and learner level
- Create context first
- Clarify before heavy practice
- Move from controlled to freer practice
- Check learning with feedback

Q6: How do you prepare a demo?

- Ask for level, time and focus
- Choose one achievable outcome
- Keep instructions short
- Plan board/slide clarity
- Prepare extension and support tasks

A demo lesson should feel clear, learner-centred and achievable within the time.

Question 7: How will you handle a mixed-ability class?

Purpose: Answer with differentiation, not “I will teach everyone the same”.

What to say

- Set a common core task.
- Add support for learners who need it.
- Add challenge for faster learners.
- Use pairing strategically.
- Check understanding at different points.

STAR mini-answer

Situation: In many classes, learners do not progress at the same speed.

Task: My role is to keep everyone working towards the aim.

Action: I use one core task with support prompts and extension questions, and I pair learners carefully.

Result: Stronger learners stay challenged while quieter learners get enough scaffolding to participate.

Question 8: How do you handle disruptive or angry learners?

Purpose: Show calm authority, safety and respect. Avoid sounding punitive.

Classroom management principles

- Stay calm and do not embarrass the learner.
- Use clear routines and expectations early.
- Address behaviour, not personality.
- Move from private reminder to formal escalation if needed.
- Protect the learning environment for everyone.

STAR mini-answer

Situation: A learner becomes upset or disrupts group work.

Task: I need to keep the class safe and continue learning.

Action: I pause calmly, restate the task, speak privately if possible and offer a clear next step. If behaviour continues, I follow the organisation's policy.

Result: The learner is treated with respect and the class remains productive.

Questions 9–10: correction, feedback and confidence

Purpose: Show that you can support accuracy without damaging fluency.

Error correction

- Correct immediately during accuracy tasks.
- Use delayed correction during fluency tasks.
- Prioritise errors linked to the lesson aim.
- Use self-correction and peer correction carefully.
- Praise effective language too.

Quiet learners

- Give preparation time.
- Start with pair work before open class.
- Use supportive nomination.
- Offer sentence starters.
- Build success through small speaking wins.

Balanced answer: fluency first when communicating; accuracy focus when practising the target language.

Questions 11 and CPD: adaptability and growth

Purpose: Employers want teachers who solve problems and keep improving.

Online class problem

- Have backup materials ready.
- Give clear instructions in chat.
- Use low-tech alternatives quickly.
- Keep learners informed and calm.
- Follow up with materials or recording if policy allows.

Continuous professional development

- Reflect after lessons.
- Ask for observation feedback.
- Study one teaching area at a time.
- Build a portfolio of lesson plans and learner feedback.
- Attend webinars and practise demo lessons.

Professional line: “I reflect, improve and document my growth instead of relying only on confidence.”

Question 12: What makes you different?

Purpose: Avoid generic answers. Build a clear professional value proposition.

Do not say only

- I am hardworking.
- I love teaching.
- I am passionate.
- I am friendly.

Better formula

- Teaching strength
- Learner group
- Method/evidence
- Professional attitude

Example

“I combine structured lesson planning with strong pronunciation and speaking support. I am especially confident helping adult learners speak more clearly and professionally, and I use feedback carefully so learners know exactly what to improve next.”

Your interview preparation task

Purpose: Create your answer bank before applying widely.

1. **Write bullet answers for the 12 must-prepare questions.**
2. **Choose 3 answers to practise aloud using STAR.**
3. **Prepare one lesson plan example and one language analysis example.**
4. **Record yourself answering “Tell me about yourself” in 60 seconds.**
5. **Keep your best answers in your placement portfolio.**

Mission output: a one-page answer bank + one 60-second introduction recording.

Final takeaway

Strong interview answers are specific, structured and learner-centred.

Before the next lesson

Practise the 12 questions once, then refine your weakest three.

STAR

Situation
Task
Action
Result

Next lesson: Demo round — lesson preparation