

# Instructor's Guide

for

## *Dress and Groom for the Workplace*

### Overview

Whether you are interviewing for a new job or trying to keep the job you already have, you need to look the part. That means grooming and dressing properly. You want to achieve a look that is clean and professional. Doing so shows you are organized, respectful, and ready to work.

While this may seem like common sense, employers and HR managers continue to mention dress and grooming as one of the factors they use to weed out candidates, and failure to follow dress code policies or keep up with basic grooming can be cause for dismissal. While it can seem trivial, or even old-fashioned, proper dress and grooming is an important part of getting—and keeping—a job.

This video gives students practical tips for dressing and grooming for any job situation. It discusses all aspects of appearance, from personal hygiene and hairstyles to tattoos and wardrobes. By watching the video and discussing the concepts it addresses, students will be reminded of the need to dress and groom properly and will realize the importance of presenting a professional appearance in interviews and at work.

The video provides multiple opportunities for questions and discussion. Feel free to follow the cues, pausing for activities and discussion as your own schedule dictates.

### Presentation Suggestions

Begin by asking students what they wore to their last interview. Ask them if they ever felt under or overdressed for an interview, or if they thought their dress and grooming ever cost them a job offer or got them into trouble at work. Without putting anyone on the spot, try to reach a consensus of what constitutes professional interview appearance and attire. Finally, ask students why dress and grooming might be important to employers? Why are there such things as dress codes, anyways? Try to give students a sense of what is at stake when it comes to their dress and grooming.

When you feel students have begun thinking about these issues, give them the **Anticipation Quiz** to complete prior to watching the video. If you wish, allow the students to state their answers and discuss them.

Show the video. Encourage students to take notes or to make changes to the answers they put down for the Anticipation Quiz while watching the video.

At the conclusion of the video, ask students to discuss any changes they made to their answers on the Anticipation Quiz as a result of information they learned. Follow up this discussion with the **Activities**.

Use the **Discussion Questions** to request oral or written responses from students or assign the questions as homework essays.

Give the **Quick Quiz** at the conclusion of class and correct the quizzes as a group. Assign the **Homework Option**, if desired.

### **Anticipation Quiz**

**Directions:** Answer these questions as completely as possible. You may revise your answers as you watch the video.

1. What are some things you should do every day before going to work?
2. True or false: In general, workplaces prefer conservative dress.
3. What might you wear to interview for a construction job? What about an administrative assistant job?
4. Is the general rule to dress up or dress down for an interview?

### **Answer Key**

1. Answers may vary but will likely include the following: Take a shower. Put on deodorant. Iron your clothes. Brush your teeth and hair.
2. True.
3. Construction: button down shirt and nice pants. Administrative assistant: conservative business suit.
4. Dress up for interviews—a notch higher than what you will be expected to wear on the job.

### **Activities**

#### **Activity #1**

**Title:** Dress and Groom Checklist

**Format:** Individual/Group

**Time:** 20-30 minutes

**Materials:** Paper, pen

**Procedure:**

1. Have each student divide a piece of paper lengthwise down the middle. Instruct students to label one half or column “At the Interview” and the other half or column “On the Job.”
2. Instruct each student to make a list of all of the things they need to do—in terms of dress and grooming—to prepare for each of those two situations. Remind them that some things (like taking a shower) will be the same, but that others (like polishing dress shoes) may be different.
3. Give students 5-10 minutes to prepare their personal checklists. When they are finished, come back together as a class and create a master checklist that includes everyone’s suggestions. Write this checklist on the board or overhead. Be sure to allow time for discussion of those items that are questionable. Also be aware that male and female students will have somewhat different lists.
4. Discuss the dress and grooming similarities and differences between interviewing and being on the job. Which things would you only do for an interview? Which things must you always do to be professional? Encourage students to revise their personal lists based on the master class list you created.

**Activity #2**

**Title:** Who Would You Hire?

**Format:** Pairs

**Time:** 15-20 minutes

**Materials:** Copies of dress up doll worksheet at the end of this guide, markers

**Procedure:**

1. This exercise is a fun way to think about the impact dress and grooming might have on hiring decisions. Divide students into pairs and give them each a copy of the worksheet and a few markers. Assign one student in each pair to draw a “Professional-looking” candidate and the other student to draw an “Unprofessional-looking” candidate. Allow ten minutes or so for students to complete their drawings.
2. Have each group of students trade their two drawings with another group. Instruct the groups to look at the new set of drawings they’ve just been given. Have them imagine that they are employers and these two drawings represent job candidates. Then have each group write three impressions they have or conclusions they jump to about the candidates based *solely* on their appearance. Have them write those impressions in the spaces provided.
3. When students have finished with their first impressions, ask them which of the “candidates” they would hire and why. What goes into making a positive, professional impression in an interview?

## **Discussion Questions**

1. Why do employers want their employees to look professional? How does your appearance as an employee reflect back on the company image?
2. By instituting and enforcing dress codes, are employers stifling people's individuality and freedom of expression? Is this justified? Is it more important to stand out or fit in at the workplace? Why?
3. The DVD suggests that the interview "isn't a beauty contest." Why, then, do people bother dressing up for interviews? Why do they take such great care with their appearance for interviews? What is the goal?

## **Quick Quiz**

**Note:** You may read these questions out loud, allowing time for students to respond, or copy and hand this out as a written exercise.

**Directions:** Indicate whether each statement is true or false, according to the video.

1. Bold colors such as bright green or pink are good choices for a job interview.
2. If tennis shoes or work boots would be worn on the job, they can be worn for an interview for that same job.
3. Some employers can mandate that you not have any facial hair.
4. There is no standard uniform or outfit that applies to every interview situation.
5. Tattoos should be covered by clothing if possible.
6. Your first job is taking care of yourself.
7. Keeping a wardrobe of professional work clothes is always expensive.
8. You want to make sure your appearance stands out in an interview, so that the interviewer concentrates most on how you look.
9. If you aren't certain about the dress code, you should ask your employer.
10. Once you are hired for the job, you don't have to worry about your dress and grooming anymore.

## **Answer Key**

1. False. Try to stick with conservative or neutral colors, such as navy, gray, and beige.
2. False. For interviews, the general rule is to dress up, not down.
3. True. Often this is for safety reasons or to comply with health codes.
4. True. Just be sure to dress one notch better than you would for the job itself.

5. True. Also be conservative with jewelry, hair styles, perfume, and cologne.
6. True. Proper dress and grooming shows you are responsible and self-sufficient.
7. False. Thrift stores often carry a wide selection of professional work attire at substantial discounts.
8. False. You want employers to pay attention to your skills and qualifications, not to your appearance.
9. True. Also, if you aren't certain about how to dress for an interview, call and ask the receptionist or stop by and visit the workplace.
10. False. You must dress and groom professionally every day if you want to keep your job.

### **Homework Option**

Instruct students that they are to come to next class as if they were dressing for a job interview. During the next class, take volunteers and have students discuss the choices they made and why they made them.



## Impressions

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