

How to Stage a Mock Citizenship Interview

Purpose

- The purpose of staging a mock interview is to help students fully prepare for their USCIS interview. The mock interview will help:
 - alleviate a student's anxiety about the interview
 - give him/her a firm idea of what to expect at their interview
 - identify where additional work is needed before the interview
- For sub-applicants of the MLC's USCIS Capacity Building Grant, the interviews should also be used as an in-class assessment for reporting purposes.

When and Where to Conduct the Mock Interview

- The MN Literacy Council recommends that these interviews are conducted in front of the citizenship class at regular intervals (ex: once a week, once every two weeks, etc), with different students each week. Doing the interviews this way will not only help students who are being interviewed, but also help further prepare students who are observing the interview. Citizenship classes throughout the country have had great success with this method of mock interviews. An added benefit of this method is increased camaraderie among students.
- In-class interviews provide an opportunity for all students to hear the application, civics, and history questions several times, and in an interview context.
- The [Citizenship Mock Interview Form](#) can also be useful in a one-to-one volunteer tutor situation outside of class. When possible, doing both in-class and out-of-class mock interviews are ideal.

Who Conducts the Mock Interview

- When possible, bring in a volunteer interviewer, ideally someone who is not as familiar to students as the citizenship teacher. This will provide a more authentic testing experience, and help students gain confidence in their ability to perform under less familiar conditions. The interview form and these instructions should be sent to any interviewer in advance.
- If you have two volunteers, one can play the role of interviewer, while the other is recording the students' responses on the checklist.
- Using volunteers as interviewers not only helps the students, but also provides a great opportunity for volunteers to contribute to citizenship classes in a meaningful way.

Preparation:

- To prepare for each mock interview, you will need:
 - a blank [Citizenship Mock Interview Form](#)
 - a clipboard
 - a “cover” sheet for the dictation item (see directions for part 3)
 - a pen (for yourself)
 - a sharpened pencil (for the student to write the dictation with)
- If you have time, doing a practice run before conducting the mock interview in class is suggested. Interviewing anyone for a practice run is helpful- the intention is to become familiar with the format.

Conducting the Mock Interview:

- Follow all instructions listed at the beginning of each section of the [Citizenship Mock Interview Form](#).
- The role of the interviewer should be played in a polite, efficient, and formal manner, similar to a job interview. The interviewer should speak clearly, at a normal pace, and *always* accommodate students’ requests for repetition or clarification.
- If a student offers an incomplete response, the examiner should try to elicit more details. In instances where the student did not appear to understand the question, a brief clarification should be offered (see [Easy English Translations of N-400 Questions](#) for suggested alternatives). After this, if the student is still not responding correctly, the examiner should move to the next question.
- The [Citizenship Mock Interview Form](#) should not be visible to students. Use a clipboard to obscure the document from view.

Scoring:

- For each question that is asked/instruction is given, check whether the student gave the “appropriate response”, or was “unable to answer”. For example:

Questions asked by USCIS Immigration Officer	Appropriate Student Response	Gave Appropriate Response	Unable to Answer
90. What ocean is on the East Coast of the United States?	▪ <i>Atlantic (Ocean)</i>	X	

- To be considered the “appropriate response”, a student must provide (with prompting if necessary) any details indicated in the “appropriate response” column of the interview form. For example, in response to “What is your date of birth?” the student must respond with a month, day, and year.
- The student must produce an answer that is comprehensible. If a response is so unclear that an ordinary person would probably not understand it, or the answer is incorrect, make a note of the error in the margin (for future coaching with the student) and check “Unable to Answer.”