

Six role-plays for HR Functions

Introduction

These activities are designed to be used at B2 level and should take around 20-30 minutes. They are designed to be used as the final activation stage of the lesson. They could be integrated in a traditional Present-Practice-Produce (PPP) methodology or become the backbone of a Task Based Language (TBL) lesson sequence.

Procedure:

1. Introduce the activity by explaining the learning goals
2. Go through the background text to the students and allow them some time to read and ask any questions they may have.
3. Assign a role card to each student, taking on a role yourself for odd numbered groups.
4. Explain the prompts for each role card and provide an example of how they can be used in the conversation. Tell the students that they should invent and note down any missing information needed to carry out the role play.
5. students pair up with someone who has a different role card and practice the role-play. The other students can listen and take notes.
6. Monitor the students as they practice and provide feedback on their use of professional English, their ability to ask and answer questions effectively, and their active listening. Use the assessment criteria to accurately assess your learner's performance.
7. After the role-play, bring the students back together as a group to discuss their experiences and any challenges they faced during the activity.
8. Wrap up the activity by summarizing the key takeaways and learner outcomes.

Tips:

- Prepare activities by asking warm up questions to establish the learner's previous knowledge of the topic.
- Encourage the students to use open-ended questions and follow-up questions to create a more natural and flowing conversation during the role-play.
- Provide additional language support (scaffolding) to students who may need it, such as vocabulary, functional language, and model responses.
- To create more variety in the role-plays, switch up the pairings and role cards, or add more prompts for students to use.
- Extend activities by discussing the approach of the learners, solutions to problem, etc.

Materials:

- Role cards with prompts
- Background text

Contents:

1. **Job Interview**
2. **Employee Complaint**
3. **Performance Review**
4. **Employee offboarding**
5. **Diversity and Inclusion training**
6. **Employee onboarding**

1. Job Interview

Learning Objectives:

- use professional English in a job interview setting
- practice asking and answering questions in a job interview
- practice active listening and empathy in a job interview

In this role-play, the student can act as the HR representative conducting a job interview and the other student can act as the job applicant. The HR representative should ask the applicant questions about their qualifications, experience, and skills to determine if they are a good fit for the job.

Background

Sysonus is small start-up known for its innovative products and cutting-edge technology solutions. As part of the company's expansion plans, the HR department is conducting interviews for a new software developer position.

The ideal candidate for the software developer position should have experience with developing and deploying software applications and should be proficient in programming languages such as Java, Python, and C++. In addition, the candidate should have a strong technical background and be able to handle complex technical issues.

During the interview process, the HR representative will ask questions about the candidate's qualifications, experience, and skills, in order to determine if they are a good fit for the job. The HR representative will also explain the company's policies and procedures, as well as provide details about the company culture and work environment.

The interview process will consist of two rounds. In the first round, the HR representative will conduct a phone screening to determine if the candidate meets the basic qualifications for the job. In the second round, the candidate will be invited for an in-person interview, where they will meet with the HR representative and the hiring manager. You are taking part in the second round of interviews.

HR Representative

You are a Human Resources (HR) representative. You are conducting an interview for a new Software Developer.

- Begin by introducing yourself and the purpose of the interview.
- Ask why the applicant wants to work for the company?
- Ask about the applicant's previous experience in software development.
- Inquire about the programming languages they are proficient in.
- Ask about the applicant's strengths and weaknesses.
- Find out how they handle complex technical issues.

Job Applicant

You are a job applicant seeking a Software Developer position at a new start-up.

- Introduce yourself and thank the HR representative for the opportunity to interview.
- Explain your previous experience in software development and highlight relevant achievements.
- Discuss the programming languages you are proficient in and provide examples of projects you've worked on using those languages.
- Talk about your strengths and weakness.
- Provide examples of how you've handled complex technical issues in the past.

Preparation

Get the learners to come up with and discuss some typical interview questions. For example:

- Can you tell me about your experience in this field?
- What qualifications do you have that make you a good fit for this position?
- How do you handle conflict or difficult situations in the workplace?
- Can you give an example of a project you completed successfully?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- Why do you want to work for this company?
- How do you prioritize and manage your workload?
- Can you describe your approach to teamwork and collaboration?

Assessment Criteria

- Did the HR representative ask relevant and effective questions?
- Did the job applicant respond appropriately and effectively to the questions?
- Did the job applicant demonstrate good communication skills, such as active listening and clear articulation of their responses?
- Did the job applicant demonstrate relevant qualifications, experience, and skills for the job position?
- Did the HR representative effectively evaluate the applicant's responses and provide feedback?

2. Employee Complaint

Learning Objectives:

- use professional English in a HR setting
- practice active listening and empathy in a HR setting
- engage in problem-solving and conflict resolution in a HR setting

In this role-play, the student can act as the HR representative and the other student can act as an employee who has a complaint. The HR representative should listen to the employee's complaint and try to find a solution to the problem.

Background

A large manufacturing company **TechyX** produces consumer electronics. The company has a global presence and is known for its high-quality products and commitment to innovation.

An employee has made a complaint to the HR department regarding their working conditions. They have reported feeling overworked and underappreciated and have expressed concerns about the company's safety protocols. The employee is feeling stressed and anxious, and their performance has been impacted as a result.

The HR representative is to meet with the employee to listen to their complaint, address their concerns, and find a resolution that is acceptable to both the employee and the company. You will need to be empathetic, respectful, and professional in your approach, while also considering the company's policies and procedures.

During the role-play, the employee may share personal and emotional details, so it's important for the HR representative to be supportive and maintain a confidential and safe space. The goal is to demonstrate active listening skills, and to guide the conversation towards a positive outcome that benefits both the employee and the company.

<p>HR Representative You are a Human Resources (HR) representative from a large manufacturing company. One of the employees has approached you with a complaint about their manager.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin by introducing yourself and thanking the employee for coming forward with their complaint. • Ask the employee to explain the situation and provide details about the incident. • Listen actively and show empathy towards the employee. • Ask the employee what outcome they would like to see. • Explain the company's policy for addressing complaints and set a timeline for resolution. 	<p>Employee You are an employee of a large manufacturing company. You have a complaint about your manager and have approached the HR representative for help.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin by introducing yourself and explaining the situation to the HR representative. • Your manager has asked you to cover other employee's shifts. You are feeling tired and overworked. • Provide details about a small accident on the production line and explain why it was unacceptable. • Express your feelings and how the incident has impacted your work. • Share your expectations and what outcome you would like to see. • Listen to the HR representative's explanation of the company's policy and ask any questions you may have.
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Variation

To make the activity more challenging, you can add a twist to the employee's complaint, such as a difficult situation involving a coworker or a disagreement with management. This will require the HR representative to demonstrate more advanced communication and problem-solving skills.

Assessment Criteria

- Did the HR representative actively listen to the employee's complaint? Did they ask open-ended questions to gather more information and show empathy?
- Did the HR representative try to find a solution to the employee's problem? Did they offer options or alternatives to the employee?
- Did the HR representative communicate clearly and effectively? Did they use appropriate language and tone? Did the employee clearly express their problems and respond to the HR representative's suggestions.
- Did the HR representative maintain a professional demeanor throughout the role-play? Did they treat the employee with respect and demonstrate empathy and understanding?

3. Performance Review:

Learning Objectives:

- conduct performance reviews and provide constructive feedback to employees.
- receive and give feedback on performance and work
- think critically and discuss your own performance and areas for improvement.

In this role-play, the student can act as the HR representative and another student can act as an employee who is undergoing a performance review. The HR representative should provide feedback on the employee's performance and set goals for the upcoming period.

Background

A mid-sized marketing company called **Virtuvu** specializes in digital marketing solutions. The company has been experiencing steady growth over the past few years, and the leadership team has made it a priority to maintain high standards of performance across all departments.

As a result, the company has implemented a performance review process for all employees. This process takes place annually and provides an opportunity for employees to receive feedback on their performance, discuss their goals for the upcoming period, and receive support and guidance from HR representatives.

Overall, the company has been pleased with the performance of its staff. However, there have been a few areas where improvements could be made, including time management, communication, and collaboration across departments.

The HR representative has the responsibility to conduct the performance review process and work with employees to set goals for the upcoming period. HR is committed to helping all employees succeed and providing them with the resources and support they need to perform at their best.

HR Representative

You are a Human Resources (HR) representative for a mid-sized company that specializes in marketing. You are conducting a performance review with an employee and providing feedback on their performance.

- Introduce yourself and explain the purpose of the performance review.
- Provide specific examples of the employee's strengths and areas for improvement.
 - 😊 teamwork, communication
 - 😞 product knowledge, time management
- Ask the employee for their perspective on their performance and any feedback they have for the company.
- Work with the employee to set goals for the upcoming period.
- Offer a 5% pay increase.
- End the review on a positive note and thank the employee for their hard work.

Marketing Assistant

You are Digital Marketing Assistant at a mid-sized marketing company, and you are undergoing a performance review with the HR representative.

- Introduce yourself and express your willingness to receive feedback on your performance.
- Provide your perspective on your performance and any feedback you have for the company.
- 😊 organization, time management
- 😞 product knowledge, interdepartmental collaboration
- Ask for specific examples of your strengths and areas for improvement.
- Work with the HR representative to set goals for the upcoming period.
- Ask for a 10% pay increase.
- Thank the HR representative for their time and the opportunity to discuss your performance.

Assessment criteria:

- Ability to provide constructive feedback and set goals for the upcoming period.
- Ability to receive feedback and work collaboratively with the HR representative.
- Reflection on the experience and ability to discuss best practices for the performance review process.

Extension task:

Have students work in groups to develop their own performance review processes and present them to the class. This can encourage creative thinking and problem-solving skills.

4. Employee offboarding

In this role-play, the student can act as the HR representative and another student can act as an employee who has resigned from the company. The HR representative should find out why the employee wants to leave the company.

- handle employee resignations in a professional and empathetic manner.
- ask effective questions to understand the reasons behind an employee's decision to leave the company.
- Encourage students to think critically about the company's policies and practices and suggest improvements where necessary.

Background

Tarovu is a mid-sized marketing company that has been around for over 10 years. The company has been very successful, but due to the pandemic, there has been a decrease in revenue, which has resulted lower pay and increased hours. One of the employees who has worked at **Tarovu** for a long time as a social media manager wants to leave. The employee is well-liked by colleagues and has been a valuable asset to the company. This is not enough to keep the employee who has got a better offer at a competitor.

HR Manager

You are a HR manager for a mid-sized company that specializes in marketing and advertising. One of the company's long-standing employees has submitted their resignation, and you have been asked to conduct an exit interview to gain insight into their reasons for leaving.

- Introduce yourself and explain the purpose of the interview.
- Ask open-ended questions to encourage the employee to share their reasons for leaving.
- Use active listening skills to ensure that you understand the employee's perspective.
- Remain neutral and professional in your responses.
- Thank the employee for their time and provide them with any relevant information about the company's policies or procedures.

Departing Employee

You are a long-standing employee at a mid-sized marketing and advertising company, and you have decided to submit your resignation. You have been asked to participate in an exit interview with the HR representative to provide feedback on your experience at the company.

- Introduce yourself and explain your reasons for leaving the company.
 - ☹️ too much work recently
 - ☹️ low pay level compared to competitors
- Provide specific examples of any issues or concerns you had while working at the company.
- Use professional language and tone in your responses.
- Be honest and respectful in your feedback.
- Thank the HR representative for their time and the opportunity to provide feedback.

Assessment Criteria

- Ability to handle employee resignations in a professional and empathetic manner.
- Ability to ask effective questions to understand the reasons behind an employee's decision to leave the company.
- Critical thinking about the company's policies and practices and ability to suggest improvements where necessary.

Extension task:

- Have a group discussion about the company's policies and practices and how they may be improved to prevent future resignations. How can the HR department address the topic of high staff turnover?

5. Diversity and Inclusion Training

In this role-play, the student can act as the HR representative and the other student can act as an employee who needs to attend diversity and inclusion training. The HR representative should explain the importance of diversity and inclusion in the workplace and provide examples of how to be more inclusive.

Learning Objectives

- Understand the language of diversity and inclusion.
- Identify the benefits of diversity and inclusion in the workplace.
- Discuss and develop strategies to promote a more inclusive and diverse workplace.
- Improve communication skills and empathy towards others with different backgrounds and experiences.
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Background

The logistics company **Warexa** in question is a medium-sized firm with around 450 employees. The company has been growing steadily over the past few years and has recently expanded its operations to new regions in Asia. While the company's financial performance has been strong, there have been some concerns about the overall performance of the staff. The HR department has received feedback from employees about a lack of diversity and inclusivity within the company culture, which has caused some tension and discomfort. To address this issue, the company has decided to make diversity and inclusion training mandatory for all employees.

HR Representative

You are the HR representative for the company. You have noticed that the employee you will be meeting with has made comments that could be perceived as discriminatory or offensive. You will be conducting diversity and inclusion training to ensure that the employee understands the importance of creating a welcoming and inclusive workplace.

- Explain the purpose of diversity and inclusion training in the workplace.
- Share examples of ways to be more inclusive.
- Encourage the employee to share their perspective and experiences.
- Set goals for the employee to implement what they have learned.

Employee

You have been asked to attend diversity and inclusion training by the HR representative. You are not sure why this is necessary and feel that you are being unfairly targeted. You are skeptical about the need for this training.

- Explain your perspective on diversity and inclusion in the workplace.
- Ask questions to clarify the purpose of the training.
- Listen to the HR representative's perspective and examples.
- Set goals for yourself to implement what you have learned.

Preparation

Note for the Trainer:

Diversity and inclusion in the workplace are practices that aim to create a work environment that is respectful, inclusive, and diverse. This involves recognizing and embracing the unique perspectives, experiences, and backgrounds of all employees, regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, or other characteristics. By fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace, organizations can benefit from a wider range of perspectives and ideas, improved creativity and innovation, increased employee satisfaction and retention, and better decision-making. It is important for companies to actively promote and support diversity and inclusion initiatives to create a more equitable and positive work environment.

It's important to create a safe and respectful environment for this activity, as the topic of diversity and inclusion can be sensitive for some students. Encourage open and honest dialogue, while ensuring that all participants feel valued and respected. Be prepared to intervene if necessary to maintain a positive and productive learning environment.

Warm-up Questions

- What does the term "diversity and inclusion" mean to you?
- In your opinion, why is diversity and inclusion important in the workplace?
- Can you give an example of a time when you witnessed or experienced discrimination or exclusion in the workplace?
- How do you think diversity and inclusion can benefit a company or organization?
- What steps do you think a company or organization can take to promote diversity and inclusion in the workplace?

Assessment Criteria

- Did the HR representative clearly explain the importance of diversity and inclusion in the workplace?
- Did the HR representative provide clear and relevant examples of how to be more inclusive?
- Did the employee ask questions or provide feedback where appropriate.

Extension Task:

As an extension to the role-play activity, students could be asked to create a training program on diversity and inclusion for their company, using the strategies and skills learned in the role-play. They should present their program to the class, highlighting the key elements and objectives of the training, as well as the methods and materials used. This could be done individually or in small groups.

6. Employee Onboarding

In this role-play, the student can act as the HR representative and the other student can act as a new employee who is being onboarded. The HR representative should explain the company's policies, procedures, and culture, and answer any questions the new employee may have.

Learning Goals

- Understand the importance of the onboarding process in a company
- Practice effective communication and active listening skills
- Develop an understanding of the company's policies, procedures, and culture
- Build a positive and supportive relationship between the HR representative and the new employee

Background

Instruxo is fast-growing tech startup which specializes in developing mobile apps and software for businesses of all sizes. A new office assistant is being onboarded. The office assistant will be responsible for managing administrative tasks to keep the office running smoothly. They might answer phone calls, handle email correspondence, schedule appointments, and keep the office organized. In addition, they may also provide support for other departments, such as helping with basic bookkeeping or assisting with marketing initiatives. Given the nature of an Edtech startup, they may also be responsible for setting up and maintaining the technological infrastructure, such as laptops and software, used by the staff.

HR Representative	New Employee
<p>You are the HR representative of a large Edtech company. A new employee has just been hired, and it is your responsibility to ensure that they are properly onboarded.</p> <p>Explain the company's policies and procedures to the new employee. Explain the main responsibilities of the job Answer any questions the new employee may have about the company. Explain the company's culture and values to the new employee. Explain the company's fire safety rules.</p>	<p>You are a new employee at a large Edtech company. You are excited to start your new job and want to ensure that you understand the company's policies, procedures, and culture.</p> <p>Ask the HR representative questions about the company's policies and procedures. Ask questions about the responsibilities of the Office Assistant's job. Ask the HR representative to explain the company's culture and values. Share any concerns or questions you may have with the HR representative.</p>

Assessment Criteria:

- Effective communication skills
- Active listening and engagement in the onboarding process
- Clear and concise explanations of the company's policies, procedures, and culture
- Able to explain the responsibilities of a job.
- Positive and supportive attitude towards the new employee

Extension Task:

As an extension to this activity, students can create a job aid for the onboarding process. They can create a checklist or guide that includes key steps, important information, and best practices for welcoming new employees to the company. This can be shared with the rest of the class as a resource for future onboarding sessions.