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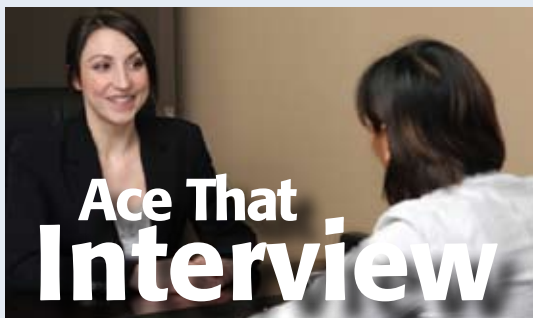
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## Ace That Interview

Are you looking to move on to a new teaching position or into administration? Whether you're applying for your first teaching job or just looking to switch positions, a good interview is crucial to landing the spot you want. It's difficult to guess what to expect when you're in the hot seat, but our teacher-experts have put together tips you can count on.

1. When asked about your approach to classroom management, be prepared with some examples that emphasize how you are proactive in your approach, not reactive.
2. When asked about your strengths and weaknesses, be honest. Remember, no one is perfect, and your ability to articulate areas in which you can improve is seen by interviewers as a strength in itself.
3. When questioned how you handle disruptive students, convey that you see disruption not as an opportunity to discipline a child, but more of an opportunity to teach him or her.

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*"Education is a better safeguard of liberty than a standing army."*

—EDWARD EVERETT

## Friends You Can Count on

Being part of a strong teacher community will help you grow and thrive as a teacher. Nothing is better than having teacher friends to share ideas, laughs, and encouragement on those tough days.



A 2007 nationwide survey conducted by The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement revealed that out of 5,000 teachers polled, only 53 percent participated in routine collaboration, or even a casual planning period with a co-worker. Many saw it as "just another obligation," but it doesn't have to be that way. Studies show collaboration positively correlates with motivation, student achievement, and overall job satisfaction.

**Not sure where to begin? Here are a few tips to get you started:**

**Always remember, collaboration is voluntary.** Forced meetings only foster resentment and prevent teachers from really opening up. "Choice is important to effecting changes," says Teresa Starr, Vice Principal of the Surrey, British Columbia School District and author of *Creating and Sustaining Collaborative Relationships Among Teachers*. "Teachers need to be able to choose with whom and how they will collaborate in order to have a meaningful collaboration that will be sustained." Pair up with a co-teacher you respect, a past mentor, or a new teacher whose potential you recognize.

**Remember, all collaborators are created equal.** "A true collaborative relationship cannot be achieved if there is a sense that one person's knowledge is superior to that of others," says Starr.

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## Friends You Can Count On

*continued from page 1*

The labor between you and your co-teacher must be divided proportionately, so a sense of responsibility and success can be shared. Don't let your co-teacher do all of the legwork, and vice-versa. A written set of responsibilities will help foster this mutual respect.

### Establish a regular time and place to meet.

According to the Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, "Time for collaboration can be high-jacked by personal conversation, a project, or crisis that has suddenly appeared on the horizon." If your collaboration is going to be routine, make it a priority. That doesn't mean it has to be formal; if you're limited on time or need a change of pace, schedule 15 minutes of planning over coffee, but stick to the task at hand.

**Create a shared, focused goal.** "Teachers' shared beliefs are the fundamental building blocks to establishing collaborative practices," say Cook and Friend, authors of *Co-teaching: Guidelines for Creating Effective Practices*. It is important to enter into collaboration with personal goals, but create joint ones as well. Remember, your first collaboration might not be the success you envisioned; sharing responsibility and letting go of complete control takes time.

**Talk to an Administrator.** If your district doesn't have a policy for habitual teacher collaboration, change may have to come from the top. "Administrators need to assist teachers in finding time to talk," says Starr. If you're in need of more time to collaborate, encourage your Principal to schedule informal gatherings and team-building activities, or provide professional development opportunities.

#### Sources:

The Center for Comprehensive School Reform  
[www.centerforcsri.org](http://www.centerforcsri.org)

Teachers Helping Teachers  
[www.pacificnet.net/%7Emandel/index.html](http://www.pacificnet.net/%7Emandel/index.html)

Teacher Link <http://teacherlink.ed.usu.edu/tlresources>

Teacher Collaboration and Ambitious Teaching  
[www.newhorizons.org/spneeds/inclusion/staff/horn.htm](http://www.newhorizons.org/spneeds/inclusion/staff/horn.htm)



# Laughter in the Classroom

## Here's a collection of funny, short anecdotes from teachers about life in the classroom:

### The Goopy Dance

The daily schedule for my first-grade class is always posted on the wall. My students look forward to reading it since our end of the day activity is always something fun. One morning, one of my students could barely hold his excitement. "When is it?" he asked, "When are we going to do the goopy dance?" My phonetic reader had indeed read the schedule, but was not familiar with the word "guidance." He was a little disappointed to learn that we were not scheduled for a sticky dance in a tub of slime, but for a visit from the school guidance counselor.

—Debbie M., Palm Harbor, FL

### Taste Buds

My class was having a great discussion about how our senses respond to the sight, sound, touch, smell, and taste of different things. Then one little boy raised his hand and said, in a very matter-of-fact manner, "Boy, that's for sure. Anytime I eat anything sour, my taste bugs wake up and start crawling around really fast in my mouth."

—Melissa G., Murrieta Valley, CA

### My Little Champion

One morning, one of my tougher little guys, Billy, came into the classroom — shirt untucked, disheveled, and a little tearful. "One of the big kids on the bus, he said you was fat, and I said you wasn't, and he pushed me and I hit him," Billy explained. I hardly knew what to say. "Please don't get into trouble," I said sadly. "I am overweight. Don't pay any attention to them." I washed his face, straightened his shirt, and gave him a little hug to start the day. The next morning Billy marched into the classroom and planted himself sturdily in front of me. "I told my mother all about what happened on the bus yesterday," he said, "and she said you ain't fat, you just got a full figure!" Even after many decades, I still remember my little champion and his tactful mother.

—Virginia B., Newark, NY

### An Iowa Pig Story

One afternoon, I was working with a small group of my first-grade students on new vocabulary words. I was explaining that the word mason means someone who makes things out of bricks. I was just about to ask for an example when one of my quieter girls lit up. She said proudly, "I think that the third little pig must have been a mason." We had read "The Three Little Pigs" earlier in the year and she made the connection!

—Pam W., Des Moines, IA

### A Hard Day's Work

As a full-time teacher and the mother of two young children, I am perpetually on the run. One day the traffic was particularly bad on the way to school, and I arrived to my classroom a bit frazzled. "Boy," I told my students, "the traffic was terrible today on the way to work!" One little boy raised his hand and looked at me quizzically. "Really?" he asked, "Where do you work?" I had to laugh — my class must think I teach for free!

—Lisa M. E., Canton, MI

## Pop Quiz

**Q:** *If you are skidding on ice, what is the best thing to do?*

answer on page 4.



## Ace That Interview *continued from page 1*

- Your strategies on teaching students with disabilities or learning deficiencies will probably come up. Talk about past success stories and strategies you have used to ensure all of your students are safe, engaged, and treated equally.
- Your techniques for accommodating students with limited English proficiency will also probably be a topic of conversation. Explain how you will engage these students in classroom activities and what resources, methods, and materials you'll utilize to keep pace with the curriculum and school district standards.
- Principals will want to know how you manage difficult parents. Although dealing with pushy parents isn't every teacher's favorite thing, you should emphasize how important it is for you to maintain mutual respect and understanding.
- Your interviewer might pop the big question: Why you? This, for many, is the defining moment in your interview. You may have given impressive answers up to this point, but this is your opportunity to explain what sets you apart from all of the other applicants.

#### Sources:

Guide to Getting the Teaching Job of Your Dreams [www.teachingheart.net/teacherinterview.html](http://www.teachingheart.net/teacherinterview.html)

A to Z Teacher Stuff - Interview Questions [www.atozteacherstuff.com/pages/4243.shtml](http://www.atozteacherstuff.com/pages/4243.shtml)

# Avoid Parking Lot Fender Benders



**Too often when drivers enter a parking lot, they leave the rules of the road behind. And sometimes the rules of civility follow. Bad parking lot drivers consider stop signs or yield signs optional or even irrelevant. They cut across parking places to find the most convenient spot. Without a doubt, it's an accident waiting to happen.**

**The best way to protect yourself is to be extra careful. Be aware of everything moving within 360 degrees around your car. Watch for cars that might be cutting diagonally across the lot or pulling out unexpectedly.**

**Above all, drive slowly. Consider finding a space away from your destination where fewer cars are parked. This gives you several safety advantages:**

- The doors on your car will be exposed to fewer parking lot dings.
- A car out in the open, not hidden between other vehicles, is less likely to be vandalized.
- You'll find a spot faster, which will make up for the time it takes to walk to the store.

**But there are also some cautions:**

- Avoid parking in secluded areas, especially at night.
- Be sure the area where you park is well lit.
- Always check your back seat before getting into your car.

Sources:  
Parking Lot Safety  
[www.homesecurityinformation.com/parking-safety](http://www.homesecurityinformation.com/parking-safety)

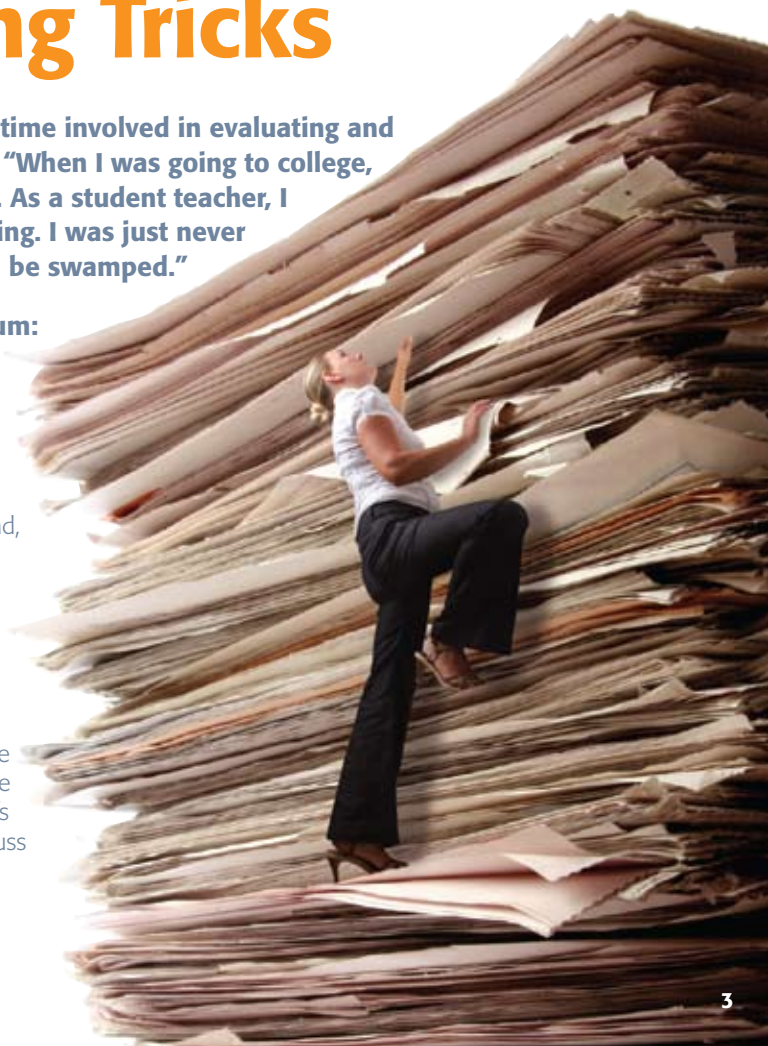
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# Overwhelmed with Paperwork? Try These Time-Saving Tricks

**One of the biggest shocks to new teachers is the sheer amount of time involved in evaluating and grading students' work. Veteran New York teacher Lisa Roe recalls, "When I was going to college, I was never told how much grading and record keeping there'd be. As a student teacher, I wrote the lesson plans and my supporting teacher did all the grading. I was just never exposed to all the paperwork. If you're not on top of it daily, you'll be swamped."**

**Here are some suggestions on keeping the paperwork to a minimum:**

- Instead of correcting each and every homework assignment, give quick and random quizzes to assess what's been learned. Collect and grade them on some days, and on others, give students the answers to evaluate their own quizzes. That way they will always be motivated to learn from the homework you assign.
- Verbal responses, individual or in chorus, are another way to check learning. Student-to-student methods of response give each student the chance to respond, and a peer will usually correct wrong responses.
- Measure student achievement formally by preparing short quizzes that test specific skills and concepts. These are easy to correct, and they give information you can use immediately.
- Get help from your students. Instead of developing and duplicating practice pages, have your students make their own practice problems. To gauge their comprehension, for example, have students make up five questions that could be used to test whether their classmates understood the chapter. Have them star the question they think is best. Examine that one question. If you doubt the student's understanding, then check the rest. Choose several of the best questions to discuss as a class or answer individually.



Sources:  
Timesavers for Teachers [www.timesaversforteachers.com](http://www.timesaversforteachers.com)  
Help for Your First Class <http://teacher.scholastic.com/newteacher>



- Drive with your headlights on.
- Be aware of conditions. Don't get overconfident because you have four-wheel drive. It won't help you stop any faster.
- Winter road conditions often result in longer stopping distances. Drivers should allow additional room between their vehicles and others.
- Slow down when approaching intersections, off-ramps, bridges or shady spots. These all have a higher potential to develop black ice that makes driving hazardous.

# Keeping Safe on Snow and Ice

**Winter conditions call for a whole different approach to driving. The right skills will help keep you safe and warm, and take you where you need to go even under the worst conditions.**

**Remember, "Ice and Snow, Take it Slow." That means slower speed, slower acceleration, slower steering, and slower braking. Give yourself extra time to reach your destination safely. It's not worth putting yourself and others in a dangerous situation just to save time.**

## Pop Quiz Answer:

If you have anti-lock brakes, press the pedal down firmly and hold it. If you don't have anti-lock brakes, gently pump the pedal.



- Avoid abrupt actions while steering, braking or accelerating to lessen the chances of losing control of the vehicle.
- Look farther ahead in traffic. Actions by other drivers will alert you to problems and give you extra time to react.
- Trucks take longer to stop. Don't cut in front of them.
- Avoid using cruise control or overdrive. Don't let your car make a bad decision for you.
- Stopping on snow and ice without skidding requires extra time and distance. If you have anti-lock brakes, press the pedal down firmly and hold it. If you don't have anti-lock brakes, gently pump the pedal. Turn in the direction of the skid and be sure to give yourself plenty of room to stop.

**Above all, be aware and be prepared.**

Sources:

Car Talk Winter Driving Tips [www.cartalk.com/content/features/WinterDriving](http://www.cartalk.com/content/features/WinterDriving)

Weather Channel Winter Tip [www.weather.com/activities/driving/drivingsafety/drivingsafetytips](http://www.weather.com/activities/driving/drivingsafety/drivingsafetytips)

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