

Sarah S. Smith

10 Main Street, Apt G21, Radford, Virginia 24142
(540)765-4321 sssmith@radford.edu

OBJECTIVE

To obtain a teaching position at the elementary level, utilizing my strong academic background in mathematics and the sciences.

EDUCATION

Radford University, Radford, Virginia May 2012
Bachelors of Science in **Interdisciplinary Studies (Elementary Education)**
Concentrations in **Mathematics and Science**
Graduated Magna Cum Laude, Deans List all semesters, Overall GPA: 3.90/4.00
Eligible to apply for Initial Licensure (June 2012)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Student Teacher January 2012-May 2012

First Grade Student Teacher, McHarg Elementary School, Radford, Virginia

- Implemented a positive discipline plan which promoted student responsibility, problem solving skills, and student accountability.
- Gathered and analyzed student data to facilitated guided reading groups and differentiated instruction to individual students.
- Planned daily lessons that included: cooperative learning, language experience approach, hands-on experiences, and interdisciplinary teaching.
- Participated in parent – teacher conferences and communications daily with parents via email, meetings, and phone conversations.
- Actively involved in Parent Teacher Organization, *Spring Safety Awareness Initiative*, offered in conjunction with the Radford City Police Department.

Early Field Experience

Aug. 2009-Dec. 2009

Third Grade Intern, Cave Spring Elementary School, Roanoke, Virginia

- Assisted and observed a third grade math teacher and facilitated an activity utilizing a board game to provide instruction in math concepts.
- Developed and taught third grade math and science, thus cultivating and refining my own teaching styles and methods
- Maintained an organized and controlled environment within the classroom to promote the highest level of engagement and active learning among the students.

EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE

Care Taker, Wedlaw Residence, Christiansburg, Virginia April 2005- Present

- Provide for an individual child with significant learning and physical disabilities.
- Provide exceptional care and therapy to help improve child's daily quality of life.
- Incorporate physical and educational exercises daily as well as include some sign language to help the child comprehend speech.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Student Virginia Education Association (SVEA) Aug. 2008-Present

- Initiated and coordinated an after-school math tutoring program for twelve 1-3 grade students in the local elementary school.

Sarah S. Smith

sssmith@radford.edu (540) 765- 4321
e-portfolio: <http://www.sssmiith.optimal>

Home Address:

414 Mountain View Dr.
Blacksburg, VA 24060

School Address:

10 Main Street, Apt 112
Radford, VA 24141

OBJECTIVE

To secure a career opportunity in a secondary school as a social science teacher.

EDUCATION

Radford University, Radford, VA

May 2012

B.S., Social Science

Overall GPA: 3.8/4.0, Dean's List Fall Semester 2011 – present
Pursuing Initial license for Secondary Education Social Science

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Panel of Teachers Assessment Workshop

Training Resources for Teaching Economics at the Middle and Secondary Level

Training for Child Abuse and Neglect: Recognizing, Reporting, and Responding for Educators

RELATED COURSEWORK IN MAJOR

History 111 US History to 1877

History 302 War in the Modern Age

History 112 US History after 1877

History 368 The Populist and Progressive Era

History 101 World History to 1650

History 352 Virginia History

History 102 World History after 1650

History 373 Appalachian History

RELATED EXPERIENCE

Radford City High School, Radford, VA

January 2012 – present

Student Teacher for 9th grade World History I

- Studied under mentor teachers to become an effective secondary Social Science teacher
- Created a positive classroom environment that balanced opportunity for individual creativity with maintaining overall classroom order and structure.
- Developed and taught units related to 9th Grade SOLs, including a multidisciplinary differentiated learning Egyptian Project in which students created and participated in a number of group and individual game based and interactive activities to master the 9th Grade SOLs related to this topic.
- Updated assignments daily on “School Notes” and communicated with parents regularly via emails, phone conversations, and parent-teacher meetings.

Pulaski County High School, Pulaski, VA

October 2011 – December 2011

Blocking Student for 9th/10th grade

- Observed teaching methods of 9th grade World History I and 10th grade World History II classes.
- Worked with IEP students and learned to accommodate lesson plans to fit their individual needs.
- Devised motivational plans to help students succeed in passing the SOL's

Dublin Middle School, Dublin, VA

August 2011 – October 2011

Blocking Student for 8th grade Civics class,

- Assisted the teacher for 8th grade Civics classes

Cover Letters... Cover Letters...Cover Letters...Cover Letters....



General Guidelines

Employers see your cover letter before they see your resume, so..

- Be diligent! Proofread all letters for mistakes!
- Double check your contact information, as well.
- Remember to date and sign your letters.

For reference purposes, keep copies of all of your letters as well as correspondence received from organizations. Include the following notations when enclosing items: Enclosure(2), Encl.,

Cover Letter

This is a letter of application or letter of inquiry to the organization. This is the first way an employer will get to know you. Make sure your letter reflects your personality and what you can contribute to the organization. Call attention to information on your resume but don't repeat yourself. Your letter should be direct and brief (no more than one page) and should be accompanied by your resume.

- Use paper that matches your resume (white, cream, off-white or pale gray)
- RESEARCH the employer! Demonstrate your knowledge of the organization.
- Use powerful, selling words (verbs and nouns)

Other Written Communications

- Most districts will, upon receiving your initial letter of application, send you a district application form. Read the instructions as to whether to type or print the application. Most districts will accept neatly printed applications. Return the completed district application form with a letter thanking them for their prompt attention to your letter of application (repeat the position); inform them of what documents have been forwarded, and volunteer to provide any additional information that will enhance your application. Restate your willingness to come for a personal interview.
- It is critical that you follow the guidelines established for each school/school district.

“Thank You for the Interview” Letter

Immediately after you have had an interview, it is important to send a brief thank-you to the potential employer. Many employers expect to receive thank-you letters within a couple of days of the interview. Note: Thank-you letters should always be sent, even if you do not expect to receive a job offer from the employer or if you have decided that you are no longer interested in the position.

- Express appreciation for their time and consideration
- State the position for which you interviewed, the interview date and location, include some reference to your conversation
- Reaffirm your interest; mention any important items that you forgot to mention in the interview, include any additional qualifications of work experience not mentioned on the resume.
- Mention your availability for an additional interview.
- Close with a feeling of enthusiasm for the position and the organization.
- If you interviewed with more than one person: you do not need to send a thank you note to each person, send one to the person who arranged the interview or to the individual who will be making the hiring decision.
- If you are no longer interested in the position, thank the employer for their time and ask that your application be withdrawn.

“Follow-up” Letters

Some reasons for follow-up letters: acknowledgement of the offer, acceptance of the offer, declining the offer, restate interest in the organization; send a new resume for consideration because of a change in qualifications or address; etc.

Letter Outline

(4-10 spaces)

P.O. Box 1584 (Your Address)
Radford, VA 24141 (City, State, Zip)
(218) 299-2129 (Your Phone & Email
(2-4 spaces)

Date
(2-4 spaces)

Mr. /Ms. Employer Name, Title (It is critical to address your letter to the appropriate person.)
School Division / Department/Organization
Address
City, State, Zip
(2-4 spaces)

Dear Ms. /Mr. XXXXXXXX:
(1 space)

Opening Paragraph: Your Opening Paragraph should be creative and catch the employer's attention. State why you are interested in the employer and the position for which you are applying. Indicate how you learned about the position. Demonstrate your knowledge of the employer – show them that you have done your homework!

(1 space)

Middle Paragraph(s): These should stress what you can contribute to the organization. Highlight your particular experiences and abilities (not just responsibilities) that relate to the position for which you are applying. Do not duplicate the specific information already outlined in your resume. For a **letter of inquiry**, mention your interest in specific types of positions or discuss the skills that you would like to utilize within this organization. A **letter of application** should indicate your knowledge of the job description and illustrate that you meet the qualifications.

(1 space)

Closing Paragraph: This paragraph should serve as a summary of the letter, a call to action (i.e. a request for an interview), and a “thank you” to the employer. Inform the employer of any of the following if they apply to your situation: you will be in the area on a certain date or if you will be away for an extended period of time and you will need to be contacted at a different location (always make it easy for an employer to contact you). If appropriate, request any necessary application materials from the employer.

(1 space)

Complimentary Closing (Sincerely, Sincerely yours, etc.)
(4 spaces)

Signature
Your Name
(1 space)
Enclosure

The Education Interview

Convincing the District that you are The Right Candidate



DO YOUR HOMEWORK

If you come to an interview thinking that you can just wing it and don't have to prepare, the interviewer will be able to tell. In order to market yourself effectively, you need to do your homework – both about yourself and the school districts you are considering.

Self-Assessment: Identifying your own strengths and weaknesses is the first step in interview preparation. Make a list of things you do well and things that you need to work on. Become efficient at describing yourself in a positive and confident manner, describing your skills in terms familiar to employers (dependability, quick learner, competent, enthusiastic, dedicated...). Be sure you can think of real life examples to relay these qualities. Employers recognize that beginning employees still have much to learn. They will appreciate your honest and articulate assessments.

Research Potential Employers: LEARN AS MUCH ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION AS POSSIBLE! After all, how are you going to interview well if you don't know the organization's mission statement, goals, expectations, etc.? When you request applications, ask for information about the district, as well. Check out the school district's web site. It is generally the best source of up-to-date information. Local Chambers of Commerce are another excellent resource for gathering information about schools and their communities. And, don't forget your network!

DRESS PROFESSIONALLY

First impressions can make or break an interview! Here are some tips to make the right impression:

Your clothing – Dress conservatively! A good guideline is to dress as you would for an important day at school. Wear clothes that look professional and are comfortable...you want to be able to concentrate on the interview and not on your appearance.

Your shoes – Clean, shined and comfortable!

Your accessories – Nothing that jangles, shimmers, or attracts more attention than you (including your make-up and/or fragrance).



BE PUNCTUAL!!!

Arrive on time- or early, and know where you are supposed to be. Before the day of the interview, you should find out exactly where to go and figure out how long it will take you to get there—taking traffic and other delays into consideration. When you arrive on site, introduce yourself to the receptionist and explain why you are there. Always be courteous to the office staff – they are often asked for their impressions of candidates, and you don't want to damage your chances because you were rude to the secretary.

REMEMBER THE MAGIC FOUR

When your interviewer greets you keep in mind the MAGIC FOUR:

1. Smile (be FRIENDLY and SINCERE)
2. Make and Maintain eye contact
3. Radiate Confidence . “Hi, I’m _____; it’s a pleasure to meet you, Ms. _____!”
4. Offer a firm, but not crushing handshakes. (No limp fish or bone-breaker handshakes)

DURING THE INTERVIEW...

The interviewer will control the direction of the interview, but you need to control your body language and answers. Because interviews tend to be subjective in nature, your enthusiasm, self-confidence, and believability will all affect the outcome. You can only make one first impression – and your non-verbal communication speaks at least as loudly as your words do.

Do Not

Chew gum
Interrupt the interviewer
Look at your watch
Say anything negative about past employers.

Do

Be Positive
Be pleasurable and personable
Make sure you know the interviewer’s name- ask for their card
Ask questions

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

Proper follow-up is critical to this process! Within 24 hours of the interview, write and send a thank you letter to the interviewer. This is your opportunity to reiterate your interest in the position and to express your thanks for the opportunity to interview – an opportunity, unfortunately, that few candidates take advantage of. This is a step that may give you an edge over other candidates. You may also want to send an email (well written and mistake-free).

Frequently Asked Interview Questions

The secret to interviewing is to practice. The more you practice the easier interviewing will become.

While all jobs and all interviewers are not the same, there are certain questions that are usually asked of candidates during an interview. These questions fall into two categories: “**the getting to know you**” questions and “**the why do you want this job**” questions. Also, even though organizations look for somewhat different things, most employers look for candidates with the following characteristics:

- Ability to assume responsibility
- Organizational/planning skills
- Willingness to work hard
- Nice personal appearance
- Initiative/drive/resourcefulness
- Leadership
- Motivation
- Creativity
- Ability to handle stress
- Written communication skills
- Self-discipline
- Job-related experience
- Confidence/self-reliance
- Entrepreneurial spirit
- Interpersonal skills
- Need for advancement
- Flexibility
- Appropriate academic major
- Oral communication skills
- Defined career goals
- Personality
- Strong GPA
- Interest in the job
- Computer literacy

Questions & Helpful Hints for Answering

Here are some questions that educational employers such as school systems, typically ask. Listed next are examples of them and some hints on how to answer them.

1. **Tell me about yourself.**

Do not get rattled by this question, and do not go into your life story. Think of the qualities that employers look for: Do you have an example of how you demonstrated some of these qualities? If you do, then state that. If that doesn't work for you, then qualify the question. Ask “What area of my background would be most relevant to you?” and take it from there.

2. **Can you work under pressure?**

Don't just give a yes or no answer; elaborate. Explain why and give an example.

3. **Describe the relationship that should exist between a teacher and principal?**

Think about what you envision as being the relationship between teacher / principal. Don't just make it up. Think about why you would want a supervisor to be supportive or hands-off or a mentor or give autonomy, etc. Be realistic in thinking about whether or not your potential supervisor is asking the question and what his or her style seems to be now. This is a good question to ask of him or her, too.

4. **What are three of your strengths?**

Isolate high points in your background. Always back your answers with specific examples. You do have at least three strengths. Your biggest mistake here is to sell yourself short!

5. **What aren't you good at?**

This is a direct invitation to put your head in a noose. Decline the invitation. There are three ways to approach this question.

- If there is a minor part of the job about which you lack knowledge but will gain it quickly, use that.
- Put the weakness in the past. You had it once, but now you are over it.
- Design the answer so that your weakness is ultimately a positive. This one is your best move.

6. **Why do you want to be a teacher?**

This question tries to examine your reasoning processes. The way to tackle this question is to focus on the practical. Also, an employer may be able to tell whether or not you enjoy your field. Enthusiasm is important.

7. **What do you know about our school?**

You cannot answer this without researching the company, so be prepared and do your research.

8. **What do you think it takes to be a good teacher? Do you fit that profile?**

You should really think about this ahead of time. Think of three top traits that you believe a teacher should possess. Give examples or reasons why you chose these three things. Make sure they are three things YOU also possess. Give examples of how you have demonstrated each trait.

9. **What two or three things are most important to you in your job?**

Be honest here, too. But also be professional and career-oriented. Talk in terms of values such as: helping and educating students, interacting with many different people, making tough decisions, having a variety of responsibilities, having the opportunity for advancement, being recognized for your contributions, making a difference in peoples' lives, etc. Stay away from those more egocentric reasons such as summers off, pays well, benefits package, fun social atmosphere, easy commute.

10. **What do you like best about working with children? Least?**

Again, be honest and give examples. Talk about any experience you have had with children. If you really loved a certain experience, talk about that experience and the skills you used, relating with your current field. Be honest also with the least liked aspect. Be sure this is appropriate. Refer back to the weaknesses question. Use something that is not too negative.

11. **Where do you see yourself in five years?**

Employers want to see that you are thinking about the future. A good way to answer is to identify yourself with the profession you want to get into.

12. **How are you preparing yourself to achieve your goals (getting you to where you see yourself in five years)?**

This question focuses on your reality of having attainable goals and the motivation to achieve them. Give examples of what you're doing to get you closer to those goals.

13. **Tell me about a difficult situation and how you dealt with it.**

Talk about a work-related situation, if possible. However, some stories of personal struggle, when relayed carefully without too much detail, may be helpful in showing your determination and ability to "pull yourself up by your bootstraps." Be careful of sharing TMI!

14. **Would you handle that same situation differently now? If so, how?**

Honestly talk about how, through this experience, you've gained some new tools or skills with which you

might react differently in the same situation again. Sometimes this may even be a change in how you reacted to the difficulty of the situation.

15. Tell me about a time when you were an excellent teacher.

This should be a story of going above and beyond to assist someone.

16. Tell me about a time when you were most proud.

Again, try to keep it career-related. Make sure you are proud because of something you accomplished rather than being proud of someone or something else of which you had no contribution.

17. How have your college and student teaching experiences prepared you for a career?

Talk about a couple of concrete skills you have learned which will be of benefit to you in your position.

18. How do you go about developing lesson plans?

Think of a time when you developed something creative and unique. Describe your process. Be sure to talk about how it was received. Have your portfolio ready to reference.

19. How do you think a friend or professor who knows you well would describe you?

Of course, be honest. Think about any compliments you have gotten on projects or activities. Don't just tell characteristics, but include examples of why friends or professors would describe you that way.

20. Why should I hire you?

This is where you should really sell yourself. Highlight areas from your background that relate to the company's needs. Recap the interviewer's description of the job, matching it with your skills.

21. What kinds of varied learning activities have you planned/implemented this year and why?

This question is looking for evidence that the teacher is creative and resourceful and can adjust strategies & procedures to meet the needs of students.

22. Tell me about your teaching style.

Demonstrate your positive attitude, commitment to children, flexibility, willingness to work with an array of abilities and that you can employ a variety of activities.

23. How do you build positive student self-concept when working with children?

Talk about your desire for student successes, confidence, and motivation, interactions, avoiding put-downs, dealing with problems in private and providing opportunity for recovery.

24. How do you use technology to improve your teaching and enhance the curriculum?

Talk about your personal use of technology and how you link technology to curriculum objectives.

25. If I observed you teaching a lesson, what are some things I would notice?

This question is looking for you to display that you are child centered and use a variety of strategies catering to various learning styles. Use hands on experiences.

Elementary School Specific:

1. What type of reading program did you use in student teaching?

2. How would you describe the ways children learn from, for example, ages 6 to eight?
3. If you could design the ideal elementary classroom, what would it look like?
4. We know that children learn by making connections. What implication does this have for the elementary curriculum?
5. Which subject area do you believe is your strength? Which is your weakest? What steps will you take to improve this area?

Middle School Specific

1. Much has been written regarding the motivation of students at this age. What do you think contributes to the lack of motivation some students feel?
2. What do you think is an appropriate amount of homework for this age student? How much weight would homework hold in your consideration for grading on report cards?
3. What do you think are the top three qualities needed to be a successful middle school teacher?
4. What is meant by “teaming” at the middle school level? How does it support instruction?
5. What are some characteristics of middle school aged students that need to be considered when planning middle school programs?

Secondary School Specific

1. Which should be the primary concern of high school teachers: the content or the kids? Provide a rationale for your choice.
2. How would you motivate a student to do their work when they absolutely refuse to do anything?
3. Describe your grading practices. What ingredients go into grades and what percent would you give to each?
4. What are some alternative scheduling configurations being used at the high school level? What are the strengths and weaknesses of each?
5. What do you believe is an acceptable failure in courses at the high school level? What do you believe causes school failure?

Additional Questions to Consider:

Practice Hint: Brainstorm and practice answers with a friend.

- You know that a staff member has been talking behind your back about what he or she sees as your ineffective teaching methods. What would you do?
- How would you assist children in their development of critical thinking and problem solving skills?
- How do you feel the “rapid learner” should be provided for in your area of teaching?
- Some of your students always finish their assignments early. How would you deal with the free time that they have?
- How would you work with students who perform below grade level, especially those from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds?
- Are parent/teacher conferences important? Why or why not?

- How would you use teacher aides and parent volunteers?
- What is your philosophy of education?
- What do you especially like or dislike about your educational training to date?
- How do you want your students to view you? Do you want your students to like you?
- What are some factors that you feel are most important in motivating you to do your best work?
- How important is organization and planning for a teacher?
- Are you a perfectionist? Do you expect perfection of students?
- What would you do if a supervising principal criticized a technique you were using?
- What are your perceptions of the role of a principal?
- Would you describe yourself as a team member or an individual achiever?
- Would you describe any student management techniques that have been particularly effective for you?
- Would you comment on how you interact with students, teachers, associates, supervisors, and parents?
- To what extent do you use a lesson design model in your teaching?
- What is your feeling toward district curriculum guidelines as they relate to your classroom teaching?
- How do you motivate students to learn?
- What is your philosophy of discipline?
- What is your plan for disciplining students?

Questions for Candidates to Ask Employers:

If you are serious about teaching in the district you are interviewing, there are many questions to which you need to know the answers before you accept an offer. Your interviewer will surely cover some of your questions, but by asking pertinent questions you will show your interviewer that you do understand fundamental issues relating to teaching. You should have several questions in mind before you arrive for your interview. The following 17 questions should give you a good start.

1. What is the teacher/student ratio in your district?
2. Do you encourage teachers to earn advanced degrees?
3. How many classes a day will I be expected to teach?
4. Do you have teachers serving in areas for which they do not have full certification?
5. Tell me about the students who attend this school.
6. What textbooks does the district use in this subject area?
7. Do teachers participate in curriculum review and change?
8. What support staff members are available to help students and teachers?
9. How does the teaching staff feel about new teachers?
10. What discipline procedures does the district use?
11. Do parents support the schools? Does the community?
12. Do your schools use teacher aides or parent volunteers?
13. What allowances are provided for supplies and materials?
14. Does the administration encourage field trips for students?
15. How are teachers assigned to extracurricular activities? Is compensation provided?
16. Does the district have a statement of educational philosophy or mission?
17. What are the prospects for future growth in this community and its schools?

Portions of the Interview Section was adapted from materials available at: <http://www.clarke.edu/page.aspx?id=7876>

Don't forget to use your Resources! RU Career Services is here for you!
Make an appointment today: email us @ csc@radford.edu or call us @ 540-831-5373
Find us on Face Book & LinkedIn