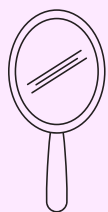


How to be honest-but-not-too-honest about why you're leaving the classroom

When you're writing a cover letter or preparing for an interview, it can be hard to explain why you're making a transition in a way that feels both authentic and positive. This framework can help!



Reflect on what you've learned

Maybe you love teaching but want to try something new, or maybe teaching was never a great fit for you; regardless, you have learned a lot from your experiences. Describe those lessons: what skills did you hone, and what are you most thankful for? That way you can highlight your strengths and demonstrate a grateful & reflective mindset!



Describe what you're working toward

If you're in a tough situation, it's natural to want to justify your unhappiness by sharing a list of grievances. However, this just makes it easy for the hiring manager to picture you criticizing their company one day. Instead, describe what your ideal role looks like - for example, "my principal doesn't respect me" can become "I want a job where I'm trusted to do my best work." See the next page for more examples!



Reference the specific job at hand

When you feel compelled to over-explain why you want out of teaching, you can redirect the conversation to the reasons why you want *into* this new field. Get specific about the company's mission and the particulars of the role. Yes, this requires research (and means you have to actually want the roles you apply for, which is an important gut check!)



Choose optimism over cynicism

You are not "giving up" by leaving the classroom. You're making a change so that your career is a better fit for your goals, strengths, and needs. Especially if you want to work in EdTech, it's important to convey that you're still heavily invested in improving education and believe in this company's ability to make a difference!

YOU THINK...

"My teaching job does not pay me enough."

In the business world, your compensation increases when you understand what's expected of you and exceed those expectations. Instead of naming salary as your motivator, express your desire for professional development & clear criteria for success in your role -- that way you highlight your work ethic and avoid striking the wrong tone.

YOU SAY...

"As a teacher, I built strong relationships, learned to make the most of limited resources, and helped my students achieve excellent outcomes. Eventually, though, I felt like I hit a ceiling; I was teaching the same thing each year and no longer growing in my career. I'm looking for a job where I can develop my [Sales] skills, measure my progress, & advance when I succeed."

YOU THINK...

"I love teaching, but it's too exhausting for this stage in my life."

Some parts of teaching likely drain you more than others. By identifying the aspects of your current role that do still energize you (and connecting them to the position at hand), you convey enthusiasm and a high degree of self-awareness.

YOU SAY....

"As a teacher, I excelled at making engaging and rigorous lessons from scratch. I'm looking for a role where I can focus more on creating learning experiences rather than delivering them -- this is a better fit for my strengths and would allow my content to have an even broader impact!"

"One of my favorite parts of my job was helping newer teachers get better at their craft. I'd love a new role that allows me to partner with teachers and school leaders full-time."

YOU THINK...

"I'm in a toxic workplace & my mental health is suffering."

True story -- I actually teared up in a final-round interview when talking about my difficult teaching experience. This may be controversial, but I believe it's okay to be vulnerable once you've built a rapport with your interviewer. In the initial stages of learning about a role and team, though, it's wise to strike a positive and diplomatic tone.

YOU SAY...

"I loved so many things about teaching, especially my relationships with students and families. Ultimately, though, I am not in an environment that is setting me up for success. On a personal level, I'm looking for a job where I am respected and trusted to do my best work."