

# JA INSPIRE: VOLUNTEER GUIDE

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Thank you for participating in *JA Inspire* and helping Junior Achievement empower young people to own their economic success. Junior Achievement recognizes the growing need to spark an interest in careers and the path to career success before students enter high school. The purpose of the *JA Inspire* curriculum is to prepare students for the *Fox Cities Career Expo*, help shape students' positive attitudes about their academic or professional futures, and increase their understanding of real-world workforce readiness skills.

## PURPOSE

Students who have an idea of what they want to do after high school, based on their self-awareness and exposure to business opportunities, are much more likely to take relevant courses, stay in school, and graduate.

At the end of *JA Inspire* classroom lessons and the *Fox Cities Career Expo* event, students will have a better understanding of the courses they need to take in high school, a plan for post-secondary education, and a clear pathway to a career.

## PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

STUDENTS WILL:

- Gain insight into career clusters that interest them.
- Make connections with adults who have jobs in careers that interest them.
- See the connection between high school programming choices and careers.
- Collect information about the education required to be successful in a job.
- Practice soft skills such as communicating with professionals, and public speaking.

## DESCRIPTION

The *Fox Cities Career Expo* is a career-based event filled with learning experiences that are designed by individual industry teams to align with what the industry will need from its future employees. Unlike traditional career fairs, the students do the interviewing rather than the employer. They ask questions of volunteers from local businesses and learn about skills that will be in demand when they graduate. They participate in hands-on activities, often using actual equipment or tools used on the job. The event is designed to transform students' abstract ideas about work into tangible ambitions and plans, and to build their soft skills.

**You are teaching Lesson 2: Making The Most Of Your Opportunity.** This Volunteer-led *JA Inspire* session prepares students to make the most of the event. Preparation is critical for students to take full advantage of the event—volunteers from businesses expect that students will arrive with an idea of the careers they want to explore, and the skills needed to find information about them.

## LESSON 2: MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR OPPORTUNITY

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### OVERVIEW

In this session, students refine a plan for the *Fox Cities Career Expo* event. If possible, encourage students to spend additional time outside of class researching the participating companies.

**NOTE: This session will be taught by a Junior Achievement community volunteer, but teachers are expected to stay in the room to help with student pairings. If classroom management or special needs are a concern, consider pre-assigning students to small groups. Let students know which group they will be in and let the JA volunteer know in advance that you have assigned groups.**

### OBJECTIVES

STUDENTS WILL:

- Identify companies that they want to learn more about at the *Fox Cities Career Expo* event. Three is a good number.
- Prepare questions that they want to ask and practice asking them.
- Create an elevator pitch—a statement that explains why they are interested in a company or a job and what they have to offer and helps to connect them with the company volunteers.
- Express their expectations of the upcoming event.

### PREPARATION AND MATERIALS

- Junior Achievement volunteers will review the session and prepare student materials. The student materials will be provided by JA staff, are available online for download and printing, or are provided at the end of this guide.
  - *Activity 1: Elevator Pitch Guide*
  - *Handout: Dos and Don'ts*
  - *Activity 2: Questions Guide*
- Review the information provided on businesses and careers represented at the *Fox Cities Career Expo* and help students draft appropriate questions. Determine if additional time to research the companies and careers would be valuable to students. If so, arrange for Internet access. Pens, pencils, and blank paper is needed.

### RECOMMENDED TIME

This session should take 45 minutes to complete.

## INTRODUCTION

### 5 minutes

- Please supply the JA volunteer with an overview of the *Fox Cities Career Expo* day, including some of the logistics, but focus mainly on the content and format of the event including:
  - The number of companies and careers, with a few examples from the floor plan or online *Fox Cities Career Expo* site.
  - Structure of the event:
    - How much time students can spend with each career cluster
    - How students will be grouped
    - Other activities or instructions, if any

**NOTE: Teachers, please review *Fox Cities Career Expo* logistics with your students again before the event and complete any requirements that your school district has, especially how students will know where to go, permission slips, and anything else relevant to your school district.**

## ACTIVITY: ELEVATOR PITCH

### 20 minutes

- Talk about the importance of *networking*.
  - 💬 Networking is building relationships with others who can help you find a job and be successful in your work.
  - 💬 Research shows that networking is the most common way people find a job. This can include letting people know (friends, family members, and neighbors) that you are looking for a job. Or it could mean cultivating business relationships with others who have common career interests.
- Tell students the *Fox Cities Career Expo* event is an opportunity to practice networking skills.
- Describe an *elevator pitch*.
  - 💬 An elevator pitch is a brief, high-energy presentation used by companies and individuals to promote their products and themselves.
- Tell students it is important to have an elevator pitch prepared in case a networking opportunity arises. It is a brief overview of what you're good at, passionate about, and qualified to do.
- Explain that students will have an opportunity at the *Fox Cities Career Expo* event to tell some volunteers about themselves using their elevator pitch. The pitch is a way to do that effectively in less than a minute.

- Remind students that networking is perhaps the best way to find a job. Talking about work skills and interests doesn't come naturally for many people. Writing an elevator pitch and practicing it is one way to increase the success of networking.
- Have students create their elevator pitch.
  - Distribute copies of *Activity 1: Elevator Pitch Guide* to students.
  - Ask students to read the scenario and create their elevator pitch.
  - Circulate, making sure that students are making progress.
- Time permitting, have students' team up in pairs, or groups of four, and practice presenting their elevator pitches to one another.

#### ACTIVITY: PREPARING QUESTIONS

**15 minutes**

- Tell students at the *Fox Cities Career Expo* event, they will not only get to hear from business volunteers about their jobs and participate in hands-on activities, they will also have a chance to ask questions.
  - 💬 Being prepared will give you more information about careers or jobs you might like in the future.
  - 💬 Preparation is also essential to making a good impression.
  - 💬 Questioning and listening are skills you will need to get and keep a job.
- Hand out the *Activity 2: Questions Guide*.
- Have students pick three questions from the list.
- Tell students to add three questions of their own to ask industry professionals about the jobs and careers that will be represented at the *Fox Cities Career Expo* event.
- Ask a few students to stand and practice asking one of the questions to the JA volunteer. Refer back to the career cluster research that students completed earlier for industry-specific questions, if applicable.
- Encourage students to use as many of the Dos and Don'ts tips as they can in their mock interviews.
- Ask students what they are most curious about.
  - Ask for a volunteer to share one question. Ask why he or she wants to know more about that topic.

- ? Did anyone else choose the same question? Why?
- ? What questions did you add? Why?
- ? Does anyone have different questions for a specific company? Why are you interested in that?

- Give feedback to students based on your observation of where they had difficulty.
- Remind students that:
  - It's natural to be nervous.
  - Interviewing takes practice.
  - They will have the opportunity to ask these types of questions with the business professionals they meet at the Career Fair.

## WRAP UP

**5 minutes**

- Distribute a copy of the *Handout: Dos and Don'ts*.
  - Ask the students to review it prior to attending the event.
- Ask students to share their observations with the class and to discuss the upcoming event.
  - ? What are you most excited about?
  - ? What are your concerns?
  - ? What do you hope to get out of the event?
- If students have Internet access, encourage them to research their top three companies before the event.
- *Optional (up to classroom teacher): Tell students they will complete a summary sheet after visiting their top three businesses. They should keep that in mind during the event.*
- **Note: Teachers – step in to review the event logistics. This may need to be repeated again the day before the Fox Cities Career Expo event.**
  - Where to meet
  - What time to meet
  - Dress code and behavior
  - Items to bring or not bring; e.g., no electronic devices

# ACTIVITY 1: ELEVATOR PITCH GUIDE

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It's important to think about what you want to say before your delivery your elevator pitch. Answer the following questions to help prepare some ideas for your pitch then using your responses, craft an elevator pitch that you can share.

PREPARE IDEAS FOR YOUR ELEVATOR PITCH. PICK 3 OF THESE TO ANSWER

- What matters to you?

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- What are you good at?

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- What do you have to offer a potential employer?

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- What interests you?

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- What do you want to be remembered for doing?

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- If you asked a friend, how would he or she describe you?

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- What is one thing people should know about you?

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## COMPILE THE BASIC INFORMATION FOR YOUR PITCH:

- Your name:

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- The dream job you would like to have:

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- Skills or interests that you have that could contribute to that job:

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- Something about yourself that would make a positive and memorable impression: (Use the 3 questions you answered earlier to help you.)

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## WRITE YOUR PITCH:

Include your name, your dream job, why it's your dream job and the skills and interest you have that will contribute to your success. Remember it should only be about 1 minute long.

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# ACTIVITY 2: QUESTIONS GUIDE

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You need to be prepared to ask the business volunteers good questions and have meaningful conversations at the event. Prepare at least one question from each category. Examples are provided below but spend some time considering what you would like to know and try to write questions that aren't the same as many other students will ask. Business volunteers will take notice of those who have questions that are unique and thoughtful.

## ABOUT THE COMPANY

EXAMPLE: What type of person is successful in your company?

EXAMPLE: How many hours do you work each week?

EXAMPLE: Are there opportunities for raises and promotions at your company?

EXAMPLE: Do most people work alone or in teams?

EXAMPLE: Does your company offer on-the-job training?

## ABOUT THE JOB

EXAMPLE: What types of education or skills are required for your job?

EXAMPLE: What can I do today to begin preparing for a job like yours?

EXAMPLE: How do you use time-management skills in your job?

## ABOUT THE BUSINESS VOLUNTEER

EXAMPLE: Why did you choose this career? How did you get started?

EXAMPLE: What is the coolest thing you have ever done at work?

EXAMPLE: What do you like most about your job?

EXAMPLE: What daily tasks do you perform at your job?

## ABOUT THE CAREER CLUSTER

EXAMPLE: What are some of the entry-level jobs in career?

EXAMPLE: What is a typical starting salary for an entry-level position?

EXAMPLE: What type of on-the-job training do most companies offer?

EXAMPLE: Are there opportunities for self-employment in your career or industry?



List three other questions you would like to ask.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
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List additional questions for specific careers or companies.

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# HANDOUT: DOS & DON'TS

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DO	DON'T
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Get a good night's sleep.</li><li>2. Take a shower.</li><li>3. Dress up. Look like a business person.</li><li>4. Check your appearance in a mirror.</li><li>5. Mute cell phones and all other digital devices.</li><li>6. Be able to show that you know about the company.</li><li>7. Remember that first impressions matter.</li><li>8. Have a positive attitude.</li><li>9. Offer a firm handshake.</li><li>10. Get to the point. Express thoughts clearly and simply.</li><li>11. Make sure you answer the question you were asked. Don't ramble on.</li><li>12. Make eye contact.</li><li>13. Smile.</li><li>14. Stand tall. Sit straight.</li><li>15. Be adaptable. (No job is a perfect fit.)</li><li>16. Bring a portfolio with work samples if you have some experience to show off.</li><li>17. Follow up with a thank you note or email.</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Be late.</li><li>2. Chew gum.</li><li>3. Wear sunglasses or headgear, such as a hat or bandana.</li><li>4. Be sarcastic or disrespectful.</li><li>5. Mumble. Slouch. Twitch.</li><li>6. Criticize your teachers, fellow students, or former employers.</li><li>7. Use a cell phone or other digital device during the event.</li></ol>

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