

Informational Interview II

The **BIG** Idea

- How can I prepare for a successful informational interview?

AGENDA

- Approx. 45 minutes
- I. Warm Up (5 minutes)
 - II. Conducting Interviews (10 minutes)
 - III. Research (15 minutes)
 - IV. Interview Practice (10 minutes)
 - V. Wrap Up: Confirming Your Job Shadow Appointment (5 minutes)

MATERIALS

- STUDENT HANDBOOK PAGES:**
 - Student Handbook page 115, Informational Interview Evaluation Rubric
 - Student Handbook page 116, Research Questions
 - Student Handbook page 114, Got Questions? (from Job Shadow 5, Informational Interview I)
 - Student Handbook page 117, Job Shadow Appointment Confirmation
 - Student Handbook page 118, Job Shadow Employer Evaluation
- FACILITATOR PAGES:**
 - Facilitator Resource 1, DO NOW
 - Facilitator Resource 2, Model Interview Script
- Laptop and LCD projector
- Chart paper and markers
- Overhead projector (optional)

OBJECTIVES

During this lesson, the student(s) will:

- Research a company in preparation for an informational interview.
- Practice conducting an informational interview.

OVERVIEW

Students prepare for informational interviews by conducting online research and participating in mock interviews. The lesson concludes with instructions on confirming a Job shadow appointment.

PREPARATION

- Make arrangements to use the computer lab, and make sure students have access to the Teach for America website (www.teachforamerica.org).
- The following handouts need to be made into overhead transparencies or copied onto chart paper:
 - **Student Handbook page 115, Informational Interview Evaluation Rubric**
 - **Student Handbook page 116, Research Questions**
 - **Student Handbook page 117, Job Shadow Appointment Confirmation**
- List the day's **BIG IDEA** and activities on the board.
- Write the day's vocabulary word and definition on the board.
- For the **Warm Up** activity, make a copy of **Facilitator Resource 2, Model Interview Script** for the student who will assist you. Choose a volunteer to play the role of the interviewer, and give him/her a few minutes to review the script as the class is getting settled.
- For **Activity IV, Interview Practice**, determine pairs for mock interviews.
- At the end of the job shadow, each student will need to have his/her employer fill out **Student Handbook page 118, Job Shadow Employer Evaluation**. You may choose to have the students bring them to the class directly following the job shadow or have the employers mail them directly to you. If you choose the latter, each student will need to be provided with a self-addressed envelope and stamp.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

To reap the benefits of an informational interview, it is important to go into the interview knowing key facts about the company: what it does, biggest challenges, accomplishments, etc. Conducting research is important for the following reasons:

- Shows the interviewee (the employee) that the interviewer respects and values his/her time by not asking questions easily answered elsewhere.

- Reveals initiative, eagerness, and interest in the company.
- Helps the interviewer craft specific questions.

The web is an ideal place to conduct research about a company. While information is not always posted for the job seeker specifically, most company websites provide information that is useful in preparing for interviews.

VOCABULARY

Informational Interview: A meeting between a job seeker and someone working in a career field for the purposes of learning about an occupation, discovering whether more training or experience is needed, how one might get future job leads, and networking within an industry.

IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS

DO NOW:

(You may choose to present the Warm Up activity as a written Do Now. Present the questions on the board or overhead, and have students write only their answers on index cards. You could also choose to give the students a handout by copying **Facilitator Resource 1, DO NOW.**)

Questions:

1. What organization are you going to be visiting for your job shadow?
2. What does your organization do or make?
3. What's one question you plan on asking the employee that you interview?

[Then call on students to read their answers and continue with the Warm Up as written.]

For **Activity III, Research**, if no computer access is available, print out information about companies students will be visiting on job shadow day. If this becomes too cumbersome, students could complete **Student Handbook page 116, Research Questions**, using information found on the Teach for America website. In addition, students can use this information to conduct the practice interviews in **Activity IV, Interview Practice**.

For **Activity III, Research**, you may choose to replace the company listed with a local organization.

ACTIVITY STEPS

I. WARM UP (5 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Last week, we discussed the kinds of questions you might ask in an informational interview. Hopefully, you have a few questions you can't wait to ask. There are two more informational interview elements to consider before you're ready for your job shadow:

- Finding out more about the company you'll be visiting.
- Figuring out what a successful informational interview should look and sound like.

We will discuss each of these today. We'll also take a moment at the end of class to review how to confirm your job shadow appointment so that your host is ready for your arrival.

Let's begin with item 2 – what a good informational interview should look and sound like.

[Introduce your volunteer, who will be interviewing you as a teacher or Roads to Success teacher.]

Be prepared to discuss any strengths and weaknesses you notice.

2. [Have your selected volunteer assist you in dramatizing **Facilitator Resource 2, Model Interview Script.**]

II. Conducting Interviews (10 minutes)

1. [When you've finished the model interview, create a T-chart with columns labeled "Desirable Informational Interview Behavior" and "Undesirable Informational Interview Behavior." Ask students for their observations in each category, which might include the following:

Desirable Informational Interview Behavior	Undesirable Informational Interview Behavior
Introduced self	Didn't shake hands
Set a purpose for the interview	Interrupted
Had prepared questions	Didn't ask follow-up questions
Asked for additional contacts	Asked questions that could have been answered elsewhere
Said thanks	

2. Have students turn to **Student Handbook page 115, Informational Interview Evaluation Rubric**. Project a copy on the LCD panel or overhead projector, and discuss each item as follows.

SAY SOMETHING LIKE:

- **Listen carefully:** Remember the story about Joe Smith from last week’s lesson? In that interview, he talks about how he learned the construction business from his father, but if someone was to enter this field now, he recommended going on for more education after high school.
- **Ask follow-up questions:** Someone may give you a bit of information that makes your ears perk up. It’s totally appropriate to say, “That’s interesting! I’d love to hear more about it!” Let’s practice asking follow-up questions with a few examples. Suppose your interview subject says [insert example below]. What could you ask to get more information?
 - *One of the reasons I became a teacher is because my godmother is a teacher, and I spent a lot of time with her when I was growing up.*
 - *I think I’ve always known that I wanted to start a business of my own, I just wasn’t sure what kind.*
 - *I remember being completely overwhelmed when it was time to choose a college.*
 - *I loved my experience at State University.*
- **Ask questions that can’t be answered elsewhere:** We’ll return to this idea in a moment.
- **Ask about the interviewee’s experiences:** Asking people about their own experiences is a good way to get career advice.
- **Ask for referrals and permission to use your interviewee’s name:** Last week we discussed networking. Though referrals are more commonly requested when you’re out of school and looking for a job, you may want to follow up on a college lead or a summer job possibility. If so, it’s polite to ask your interviewee if you can use her name when you contact someone she recommends.
- **Say thank you.** Thank the interviewee for his or her time at the end of the interview, and send a thank-you note right away. It’s a rule in this game, and it will help your interviewee remember you as professional and businesslike.

In a few minutes, you’ll have a chance to practice an informational interview with a partner. First, let’s return to item #3 – asking questions that could not be answered elsewhere.

III. Research (15 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Think back to last year’s college trip and the research you did before your visit. What were the benefits of checking things out in advance? [Students respond.] Your job shadow is a similar situation – you’ll want to arrive on the scene equipped with some background knowledge about the company. Where might you find this information? [Students should suggest Internet research, but may not be aware that many companies have their own websites. Note that they can use a search engine like Google to find the correct web addresses of companies of interest.]
2. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Please turn to **Student Handbook page 116, Research Questions**. In a moment, you’ll have a chance to research the company you’ll visit during your job shadow. For now, let’s see what background information is available for a hypothetical interview with a Teach for America employee.

Project the Teach for America website (www.teachforamerica.org) using your laptop and LCD projector. Have students access the site on their own computers and follow along. **NOTE:** Students don’t need to write down the answers for Teach for America; they’ll use **Student Handbook page 116, Research Questions** to research the company they intend to visit.

- **What does the company do or make?** On what part of a website will you find general information about the company? [Make sure students realize that they can often find general information on a company’s home page.]
- **How many people does the company employ?** Where can you find information about the staff? [Point out the “Our Organization” link and explain that links like this will give them a sense of how many people a company employs. Point out that the staff listed on this page is the management team of Teach for America. The company actually employs over 1,200 staff members.]
- **What kinds of jobs are available at this company?** How can you figure out what kinds of jobs exist? [Show students that all of the employees listed on the Our Organization page have titles next to their names. You can also click on the button labeled resources for “Join Our Staff” .]
- **What kind of work experience does the person you’re interviewing have?** If there were no staff bios like the ones on this website, how might you find out about your interviewee? [Students should understand that they could search for their interviewee on Google or another search engine. Note that this information won’t always be available, but it’s good to check.]

- **What are some of the company's recent achievements?** Where will you find out? [Click the “Blog” link to show students what’s featured. Note that if a company’s website doesn’t include this information, students may be able to find general news articles using the “News” feature on Google.]
3. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Please take the next 10 minutes to research the company you’ll be visiting on job shadow day. You will use this information to create two additional questions to ask your job shadow host. You’ll also use your research in the next activity, when you’ll have a chance to practice your informational interview technique. Be sure to write legibly, as you’ll be sharing this information with a partner.

[When students have finished, have them turn to **Student Handbook page 114, Got Questions?** (from job shadow 5, Informational Interview 1) and add two additional questions based on their company research.]

IV. Interview Practice (10 minutes)

1. Pair students for interviews.
2. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Now it’s time to practice. Each of you should be ready with your prepared list of questions for your turn as the interviewer. As your partner may know nothing about the company you’ve researched, take a moment now to exchange papers so your partner can be prepared for his role as a representative of the company you’ve researched.

For the purposes of this practice interview, it’s fine to make up answers. Creativity is encouraged. As the person being interviewed, it’s your job to keep the conversation going.

Partner A will have two minutes to take your turn as the interviewer, with partner B answering your questions. When I call time, partner B will have a minute to provide feedback by completing **Student Handbook page 115, Informational Interview Evaluation Rubric**. Then you’ll swap roles.

3. Call time after two minutes to alert students that partner A needs to wind up his interview. Allow one minute for partner B to complete the rubric. Then have students swap roles and follow the same procedure for the second interview.

V. WRAP UP: Confirming Your Job Shadow Appointment (5 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** How many of you have ever made a plan with a friend, something you were really looking forward to, only to have them not show up at the appointed day and time? Your job shadow host may have carefully planned her time with you, or she may be so busy that she barely has time to think. To avoid disappointment or mix-ups, it's important to check in a few days in advance to make sure you're both clear on the date, time, and meeting place. You can also use this phone call to double-check details such as directions and dress code.

Please turn to **Student Handbook page 117, Job Shadow Appointment Confirmation** and take it home with you to use to confirm your appointment. Then make the call, take notes, and repeat everything carefully. If you don't reach the person with whom you need to speak, leave a message, and make sure to connect before the day arrives.

At the end of the job shadow, each of you will need to have your employer fill out **Student Handbook page 118, Job Shadow Employer Evaluation**. [Explain to the students how these forms should be returned. You may choose to have the students bring them to the class directly following the job shadow or you may choose to have the employers mail them directly to you. If you choose the latter, each student will need to be provided with a self-addressed envelope and stamp.]

DO NOW

Job Shadow 4: Informational Interviews II

Directions: You will have three minutes to read the questions and write your answer.

Questions:

1. What organization are you going to be visiting for your job shadow?

2. What does your organization do or make?

3. What's one question you plan on asking the employee that you interview?

Model Interview Script

[Interviewer enters room. Teacher is sitting at desk working. Interviewer starts to talk without shaking hands with teacher whom he/she is interviewing]

Interviewer: Hello. I'm *[insert your name]*. I'm here for an informational interview.

Teacher: Hello *[insert student's name]*. It is nice to meet you. How can I help you?

Interviewer: I'm exploring career paths in the field of education. I'm hoping to gather information. I appreciate your making the time to meet with me today. I'd like to ask you some questions about what you do and get your point of view on teaching as a career.

Teacher: Sure. I'm happy to help!

Interviewer: How did you get started in this field?

Teacher: Well, actually, I began in a completely different career. I was a librarian, but then something happened that really made me want to be a teacher.

Interviewer: *[interrupt teacher's thought by asking the next question]* What is your typical day as a teacher like? What are your responsibilities?

Teacher: I begin the day with... *[Ad lib answer.]*

Interviewer: So, what grade levels does this school include?

Teacher: Um, it's a high school, so that would be Grades 9-12.

Interviewer: What kinds of skills and abilities are required for this type of work?

Teacher: You need to be passionate about educating others and you need to be very patient. Having a basic knowledge of various subject areas is also important.

Interviewer: Are there other teachers, or people in the field of education, that you would recommend I speak to?

Teacher: Ms. Jones, an assistant principal over at Green Hills High School, would be a good person to talk to, but let me first.

Interviewer: *[interrupt teacher by asking the next question]* Great. I'll contact her today. Thanks.

Teacher: You're welcome.

[Interviewer leaves without shaking hands or making eye contact.]

Informational Interview Evaluation Rubric

Directions: Evaluate your partner’s informational interview technique by checking “yes” or “no” for each question.

Desirable Informational Interview Behavior	Yes	No
1. Did the interviewer listen carefully?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Did the interviewer ask relevant follow-up questions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Did the interviewer ask questions that could NOT be answered elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Did the interviewer ask questions about the interviewee’s experiences?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Did the interviewer ask for referrals? Did he/she ask permission to use the interviewee’s name when making these contacts? (OPTIONAL)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Did the interviewer thank the interviewee for his or her time?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Research Questions

Directions: Research answers to each of the following questions on the company's website.

1. What does the company do or make?
2. How many people does the company employ?
3. What kinds of jobs are available at this company?
4. What kind of work experience does the person you're interviewing have?
(**Note:** This information won't always be available. You may not know the name of the person you're interviewing, or be able to find information about them on the Internet.)
5. What are some of the company's recent achievements?

Job Shadow Appointment Confirmation

Career

Contact Information

Contact Person:

Job Title:

Name of Company:

Phone Number:

E-mail:

Street Address (and suite or apartment #, if needed):

City:

State:

Zip Code:

Details

INTRO:

Hello, my name is _____ and I am a student at _____
_____ High School. I am calling to confirm the date and time of my job shadow
experience.

**DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING DETAILS AND WRITE DOWN THE ANSWERS.
REPEAT THEM TO MAKE SURE YOU'VE WRITTEN THEM CORRECTLY.**

Date:

Time:

Directions to the job site:

Parking (if needed):

Dress code:

Lunch arrangements:

SOURCE: Nathan Hale High School, West Allis-West Milwaukee School District

Job Shadow Employer Evaluation

Thanks for taking the time to a host a _____ (name of high school) student at your place of work. Since we are very interested in the long-term success of our job shadowing program, we would appreciate you taking some time to evaluate your recent job shadowing experience. Your feedback is valuable as we plan future visits to the workplace.

Your Name	Phone Number
Title	E-mail
Company	Student Name
Date of Job Shadow	

Please evaluate the student in each of the following areas.

PUNCTUALITY				
Reported at appropriate time	Exceeded Expectation	Met Expectation	Below Expectation	Not Applicable
Departed at appropriate time	Exceeded Expectation	Met Expectation	Below Expectation	Not Applicable
PROFESSIONAL APPEARANCE				
Dressed appropriately	Exceeded Expectation	Met Expectation	Below Expectation	Not Applicable
Well-groomed	Exceeded Expectation	Met Expectation	Below Expectation	Not Applicable
PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT				
Confirmed appointment	Exceeded Expectation	Met Expectation	Below Expectation	Not Applicable
Behaved professionally at worksite	Exceeded Expectation	Met Expectation	Below Expectation	Not Applicable
COMMUNICATION				
Related well to host and others	Exceeded Expectation	Met Expectation	Below Expectation	Not Applicable
Asked appropriate questions	Exceeded Expectation	Met Expectation	Below Expectation	Not Applicable
Demonstrated interest in experience	Exceeded Expectation	Met Expectation	Below Expectation	Not Applicable
OVERALL EVALUATION				
Student seemed to benefit	Exceeded Expectation	Met Expectation	Below Expectation	Not Applicable
I enjoyed hosting a job shadow	Exceeded Expectation	Met Expectation	Below Expectation	Not Applicable

Would you be willing to host another student in the near future? (Circle one) Yes No

Please use the back of this page for comments or suggestions for improving our job shadow program.

Signature of person being shadowed _____ Date _____

Student should return this form to _____, Roads to Success teacher.

SOURCE: Nathan Hale High School, West Allis-West Milwaukee School District