



JA Inspire[®]

Entry

Teacher Guide





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Teacher Guide

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Colorado Springs, Colorado

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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 during high school. *JA Inspire*, a community effort of JA, local businesses, and educators, helps shape students' positive attitudes about their academic or professional futures, and increases 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*, students should be excited about their future. They will have a better understanding of their potential, a plan for postsecondary education, and a clear pathway to a career.

Program Objectives

STUDENTS WILL:

- Tell why career planning is important.
- Assess their values, skills, and interests and use that information to evaluate potential careers.
- Explore career clusters that interest them.
- Recognize the connection between education and training choices and careers.
- Find information about the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to be successful in a job, through company exhibits and webinars about careers that interest them.
- Develop a personal career plan.

Description

The *JA Inspire* event features learning experiences designed by participants to align with what businesses will need from its future employees. Students learn from local businesses about skills that will be in demand when they graduate. The event is designed to transform students' abstract ideas about work into tangible ambitions and plans.

Pre-event curriculum prepares students to get the most out of the *JA Inspire* event. Preparation is critical for students to take full advantage of the event.

The pre-event sessions help inform their choices of the speakers, webinars, and exhibitors that most align with their values, skills, and interests.

Preparation

Students receive a guidebook with related fillable PDF handouts to use before and during the *JA Inspire* event. In addition to the student guidebook, information about your local JA Area's event will be available to you and your students.

You are the link between the independent learning and the *JA Inspire* event. Review the student guidebook and handouts for all sessions. Learn as much as possible about your JA Area's event, participating companies, and scheduled speakers and webinars.

In the first session, students take a Career Interest Inventory. Their results may enhance the success of the event by allowing students to explore their skills, interests, work priorities, and the employment outlook for specific jobs. Be prepared to assist with any questions related to the Career Interest Inventory, found on JA Here to Career: <https://career.ja.org/cii>. **Note:** If students wish to save the results of their inventory or save favorite careers, they can create their own account on the site (not required). If students have an existing JA username and password, they can use it to log in. If your students will be attending a virtual *JA Inspire* event, the login provided for that event will only work for that event.

Students will research the participating companies in the fourth session. You may encourage them to spend time outside of class to learn more about their local economy. In the fifth session, students can use an AI Interview Bot to practice interviewing and communication skills to interact with professionals at the event.

Let students know in advance if they will receive a class grade for their participation in *JA Inspire*, which may be based on completion of the handouts, including the final reflection activity.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) LITERACY TOPICS

Artificial Intelligence can support students as they explore careers and prepare to meet potential employers by enhancing career exploration tools and providing personalized guidance. As AI becomes more integrated into the workforce, developing AI literacy skills will help students navigate job opportunities and make informed career decisions. JA USA has developed a series of AI-focused self-guided modules, as well as an interview bot, that offer a flexible way for students to explore AI concepts within the context of *JA Inspire*.

These AI resources can be completed by students independently, or integrated into classroom sessions at your discretion. If you choose to integrate the resources, refer to this table for suggestions regarding placement and context.

Session	Activity Name	Brief Description	Suggested Integration
Career Interests & Your Path	What's AI Anyway? (4 mins) https://data.ja.org/s/wzkAAA	Students get an easy-to-understand introduction to artificial intelligence, its purpose, and its role in shaping the future.	Pre-event: Introduction to AI's impact across industries and future job opportunities.
	The Brain of AI (4 mins) https://data.ja.org/s/xDkAAA	Students learn how AI systems process data, learn patterns, and make decisions.	Pre-event: Explore how AI thinks to understand how to use these tools in career interests and exploration.
Career Planning & Your Path	Learn 2.0 With AI (4 mins) https://data.ja.org/s/zjkAAA	Students learn how to use AI tools to boost learning, enhance study habits, and stay on top of academic tasks and time management.	Students plan for the next steps in their career journey.
	AI: Your Career Ally (5 mins) https://data.ja.org/s/zzkAAA	Students discover how AI can support your career exploration, growth, and job search.	Pre-event planning: Explore how AI can be used in job searches and career planning.
Local Business Means Opportunity	Think Twice, Ask Once (4 mins) https://data.ja.org/s/xTkAAA	Students learn strategies to interact with AI tools responsibly and effectively.	Pre-event research: Apply AI strategies to local business research.
	AI Bias (4 mins) https://data.ja.org/s/xzkAAA	Students learn how to identify bias in AI systems and understand its real-world impacts.	Pre-event research: Understand AI research results.
	Fact-Checking AI Outputs (5 mins) https://data.ja.org/s/yDkAAA	Students learn effective strategies to fact-check and verify AI-generated content	Pre-event research: Fact-checking strategies for accuracy on AI research.
Learn from the Experts (Virtual Event)	The Everyday Genius of AI (5 mins) https://data.ja.org/s/xjkAAA	Students discover the hidden ways AI powers everyday tools and technologies in your life.	Pre-event: Contemplate questions for employers how AI is integrated into their business (<i>in-person only</i>).
Prepare for JA Inspire Event	Interview Bot	Students can practice their interviewing and communication skills.	Students practice employer conversations (<i>in-person only</i>).

Personal Reflection and Independent work	AI Talk Made Easy (4 mins) https://data.ja.org/s/yjkAAA	Students learn the basics of communicating with AI tools to get clear and helpful responses.	Independent work: Prepare students to interact effectively with AI career bots and tools.
	Perfecting Prompts (5 mins) https://data.ja.org/s/yzkAAA	Students learn techniques for crafting precise prompts to guide AI tools effectively.	Independent work: Guide students on structuring AI queries to explore career pathways.
	GPT Matchmaking (4 mins) https://data.ja.org/s/zDkAAA	Students learn how to evaluate and select the best GPT tool for your specific needs.	Independent work: Explore the best tools to use based on interests and needs.
	AI Chat Hacks (5 mins) https://data.ja.org/s/zTkAAA	Students apply strategies to optimize conversations with AI chat tools.	Independent work: Optimize ways to use AI in their career exploration.

Implementation

This curriculum is designed to be used in preparation for the *JA Inspire* event, whether that event is in-person, virtual, or both. Your JA Area representative will let you know which type of event your students are attending and will provide details about the event.

The curriculum can be implemented in various ways. There are six curriculum sessions, five prior to the *JA Inspire* event and a reflection after the event. These sessions can be teacher led, or they can be completed independently by students at home or in the classroom. If sessions are completed by students independently, each session will take about 30 minutes to complete. If the teacher adds the introduction and wrap-up to the session, each session will take 45 minutes to complete.

Session Five has two options to choose from depending on the type of *JA Inspire* event students are attending.

- Session Five (virtual event) - This session allows students to review the speakers and webinars that will be hosted at the virtual event. If there is no virtual event, this session should be skipped.
- Session Five (in-person event) - This session is designed to ensure that students are properly prepared for the interactions with exhibitors and other students at the in-person event. Since this session is intended to be teacher led, additional instructions are provided. If students are not attending an in-person event, this session should be skipped.

Students may complete the student activity handouts via downloadable, fillable PDFs, or the handouts can be printed.

Have students complete pre- and post-program surveys. You will need to provide the links, which are found on the Student Materials sheet.

Program Overview

Activity and Time (Minutes)	Handouts	Objectives	Work and Career Readiness Pathway Competencies
<p>Session One: Career Interests and Your Path</p> <p>Teacher Intro (5)</p> <p>Developing a Career Plan (intro, video) (10)</p> <p>Career Interest Inventory (20)</p> <p>Teacher Wrap-Up (5–10)</p> <p><i>Recommended:</i> How to Develop a Growth Mindset (10)</p>	<p>Career Interests and Your Path</p>	<p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider their values, skills, and interests. • Take a Career Interest Inventory. • Relate their values, skills, interests, and Career Interest Inventory to future career opportunities. 	<p>Critical and Analytical Thinking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek and evaluate evidence to make decisions.
<p>Session Two: Career Planning and Your Path</p> <p>Teacher Intro (5)</p> <p>Why Is Career Planning Important? (intro, video) (10)</p> <p>Career Clusters (20)</p> <p>Teacher Wrap-Up (5–10)</p> <p><i>Optional:</i> Advance CTE (20)</p>	<p>Career Planning and Your Path</p>	<p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn why career planning is important. • Recognize career clusters. • Identify career clusters that match their skills and interests. • Identify requirements to obtain jobs in fields of interest. 	<p>Critical and Analytical Thinking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek and evaluate evidence to make decisions. • Weigh the pros and cons of available courses of action.
<p>Session Three: Preparing to Meet Your Future</p> <p>Teacher Intro (5)</p> <p>Preparing to Meet Your Future (10)</p> <p>Soft Skills (15)</p> <p>Education (5)</p> <p>Teacher Wrap-Up (5–10)</p> <p><i>Recommended:</i> JA Connect Work with Others activities</p>	<p>Preparing to Meet Your Future</p>	<p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand why it's important to choose a career where they can be successful and develop a career plan. • Practice soft skills. • Recognize education and training requirements and opportunities for careers of interest. 	<p>Critical and Analytical Thinking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek and evaluate evidence to make decisions.

(continued)

Activity and Time (Minutes)	Handouts	Objectives	Work and Career Readiness Pathway Competencies
<p>Session Four: Local Business Means Opportunity Teacher Intro (5) Research Your Local Economy (10) Exhibitor Booths to Visit (20) Teacher Wrap-Up (5-10) <i>Recommended:</i> What Is the Gig Economy? (10) <i>Recommended:</i> Gigs Are Everywhere (10)</p>	<p>Local Business Means Opportunity Exhibitor Booths to Visit</p>	<p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize traits of their local economy. Identify common career clusters in their area and among <i>JA Inspire</i> exhibitors. Create a list of exhibitors to visit during the <i>JA Inspire</i> event. 	<p>Critical and Analytical Thinking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weigh the pros and cons of available courses of action. Support a course of action with a clear and appropriate rationale. <p>Self-Direction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan for the short and long term by establishing appropriate tasks, timelines, and priorities.
<p>Session Five (Virtual Event): Learn from the Experts Teacher Intro (5) Speakers and Webinars to View (15) Learn from the Experts (15) Teacher Wrap-Up (5-10) <i>(Optional) AI Interview Bot (15-30)</i></p>	<p>Speakers and Webinars to View Learn from the Experts</p>	<p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify relevant <i>JA Inspire</i> speakers and webinars to attend. Note facts about the speakers and topics of webinars they will attend. Develop questions to consider when watching the speakers and webinars. 	<p>Critical and Analytical Thinking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weigh the pros and cons of available courses of action. <p>Self-Direction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan for the short and long term by establishing appropriate tasks, timelines, and priorities.
<p>Session Five (In-Person Event): Prepare for the JA Inspire Event Teacher Intro (5) Creating an Elevator Pitch (15) Preparing Questions and Making a Good First Impression (20) Teacher Wrap-Up (5-10) <i>(Optional) AI Interview Bot (15-30)</i></p>	<p>Prepare for the JA Inspire Event</p>	<p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create an elevator pitch about themselves. Develop questions for exhibitors. Learn what behavior is expected at the event. Review a form they will use to take notes at the event. 	<p>Self-Direction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan for the short and long term by establishing appropriate tasks, timelines, and priorities.

(continued)

Activity and Time (Minutes)	Handouts	Objectives	Work and Career Readiness Pathway Competencies
<p>Session Six: Visit the JA Inspire Event N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit exhibits at the <i>JA Inspire</i> event. • Attend speeches and webinars at the event (if applicable). • Complete the What I Learned section of the chart from their Learn from the Experts handout (if applicable). 	<p>Self-Direction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan for the short and long term by establishing appropriate tasks, timelines, and priorities.
<p>Session Seven: JA Inspire Personal Reflection Teacher Intro (5) Reflection and Next Steps (intro, video) (10) Personal Reflection (20) Teacher Wrap-Up (5-10) <i>Recommended:</i> JA Connect activities</p>	<p>JA Inspire Personal Reflection</p>	<p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate personal goals and priorities based on their experiences in the <i>JA Inspire</i> program. • Identify next steps, including exploration of high school coursework and other research. 	<p>Critical and Analytical Thinking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support a course of action with a clear and appropriate rationale. <p>Creativity and Innovation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectively develop, implement, and communicate new ideas to others. • Understand the feasibility of implementing new ideas and methods.

Session One: Career Interests and Your Path

Big Idea

You are a unique blend of values, skills, and interests.

Overview

Students are introduced to the concept of using their own values, skills, and interests as the foundation of career decisions. They watch the first in a series of *JA Inspire* videos on career planning. They take a career assessment and evaluate their results.

Objectives

STUDENTS WILL:

- Consider their values, skills, and interests.
- Take a Career Interest Inventory.
- Relate their values, skills, interests, and Career Interest Inventory to future career opportunities.

Video: Developing a Career Plan

Students will access the video in their digital student guidebook. You can preview the video at <https://data.ja.org/s/UgkAAA>.

Activity: Career Assessment

Students take an online career assessment, found in JA Here to Career: <https://career.ja.org/cii>.

Students have the option to save the results of their inventory and favorite careers by creating an account on the site. To create an account, students **Register** and **Login**. Students registering themselves must be able to receive email at the email address used to register in order to create a password. (Note that the login for the Career Interest Inventory is different from the one used to attend the *JA Inspire* event, if applicable.)

If students don't log in, they simply select **Take the Inventory**. Either way, before closing the inventory's results page, they need to record their scores on page 2 of the handout. Tell students that they will need to download the student activity handout PDF, fill in their answers, and save it.

You must register and log in to save your results.

Login or Register

Take the Inventory

[Already Have a Score?](#)



Note: If a student tries to log in and gets an error message, they may have a JA login associated with their email. They can reset their password if they have forgotten it as long as they can receive email at the address associated with their login.

Talking Points

- An important reason for completing the Career Interest Inventory is to identify personal strengths—your interests, skills, and work priorities (the physical and social conditions that affect the quality of a job experience).
- By knowing your strengths, you can better explore careers that may be of interest, confidently set personal goals, and increase your likelihood of success.
- Self-awareness allows you to identify why you are drawn to certain activities and why others seem challenging. It prepares you to make better decisions about your education and career.
- When you find the right career, you'll enjoy what you're doing.
- You'll meet a variety of new people in the workplace who will share some of your interests but may be very different from you in other ways. Be sure to treat everyone with courtesy and respect and be open to their views.
- Feel free to share a story about how you made your own career choices.
- This recommended introductory self-guided activity can extend student learning:
 - **How to Develop a Growth Mindset:** <https://connect.ja.org/work-career-readiness/on-the-job/growth-mindset/how-to-develop-a-growth-mindset2>

Note: Entry-level activities on JA Connect are available to everyone without logging in. Only entry-level activities are included in this program.

Session Two: Career Planning and Your Path

Big Idea

Knowledge is power: The more you know, the better choices you'll make.

Overview

Students are introduced to career clusters and focus on those tied to the results of their Career Interest Inventory. They watch the second in a series of *JA Inspire* videos on career planning. They explore the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for their careers of interest, as well as the outlook for openings in those fields.

Objectives

STUDENTS WILL:

- Learn why career planning is important.
- Recognize career clusters.
- Identify career clusters that match their skills and interests.
- Identify requirements to obtain jobs in fields of interest.

Video: Why Is Career Planning Important?

Students will access the video in their digital student guidebook. You can preview the video at <https://data.ja.org/s/UwkAAA>.

Activity: Career Clusters

Students explore career clusters using the *Career Explorer* section of JA Here to Career, with an emphasis on the ones that align to their own career interests. Remind students to save their completed student activity handout.

Talking Points

- It's important to start career planning early. The activities you devote your time to will contribute to your career success.
- A career cluster is a grouping of jobs and industries related to skills and products. If you're interested in a particular job in a cluster, there are probably related careers that would interest you.

- Every company has needs in human resources, information technology, financial management, and other careers. If you're impressed by a company whose main business is not in your field of interest, it may still have career opportunities for you.
- (Optional) Students can explore the government website [Advance CTE](#) (Career Technical Education) to learn more about careers. Encourage students to find out if their high school has a CTE program.
- JA Here to Career allows extensive exploration of career clusters and provides information about employers and education: <https://career.ja.org/>.

Students can set their area to see career salary information, schools, and employers relevant to your area (if local information is available).

Set your area ×

Set your area to see career salary information, schools and employers relevant to your area.

Q

Search by zipcode, area name, or JA area code.

Don't ask me again, but I can change at any time.

Location Name	JA Area Code
Alabama	100803
Alaska	117604
Arizona	108204
Arkansas	102503
Bluegrass	105203
Brazoria County	101004
Central Carolinas	101501
Central Florida	107601
Central Illinois	108003
Central Indiana	104603

Session Three: Preparing to Meet Your Future

Big Idea

Preparation builds confidence and helps you make decisions.

Overview

Students learn how awareness of their values, skills, and interests helps guide them to a career that is meaningful, enjoyable, and positioned for success. They learn about soft skills and explore education and training requirements in their fields of interest.

Objectives

STUDENTS WILL:

- Understand why it's important to choose a career where they can be successful and develop a career plan.
- Practice soft skills.
- Recognize education and training requirements and opportunities for careers of interest.

Activity: Soft Skills

Students explore key soft skills that are important to employers in all careers. Remind them to save their completed student activity handout.

Talking Points

- Soft skills such as critical thinking, responsibility, and good communication will serve you well regardless of which career you pursue. All employers are looking for employees with strong soft skills.
- Each job has its own specific skills, called technical skills, that may or may not transfer to a different job. Soft skills are also called transferable skills because they're always useful.
- For more on collaboration and other soft skills related to working with others, check out the activities on JA Connect: <https://connect.ja.org/listpage/playlist/22045>.

Activity: Education

Students explore the types of education and training they should consider to pursue their fields of interest, both in school and in a workplace, via job shadow experiences, internships, and apprenticeships.

Talking Points

- It's important to enjoy what you do for a career because it makes you more likely to succeed.
- All careers require training and education. Having a vision of your future career allows you to start planning as early as high school to take relevant courses and programs. Keep your career goals in mind when making academic and extracurricular choices.

Session Four: Local Business Means Opportunity

Big Idea

Your local area has its own unique economy and opportunities for you.

Overview

Students learn about their local economy. They review the list of *JA Inspire* exhibitors and the website of the local Chamber of Commerce and look for common themes, such as career clusters. They identify companies they would like to visit during the *JA Inspire* event.

Objectives

STUDENTS WILL:

- Recognize traits of their local economy.
- Identify common career clusters in their area and among *JA Inspire* exhibitors.
- Create a list of exhibitors to visit during the *JA Inspire* event.

Activity: Research Your Local Economy

Students explore the *JA Inspire* exhibitor list and the website of the local Chamber of Commerce to identify common career clusters and companies of interest. Remind students to save both of this session's completed student activity handouts.

Talking Points

- The *JA Inspire* event is intended to introduce you to the world of work and opportunities in your local community.
- Every local area has an economy, and many areas are known for their core industries, such as technology, agriculture, or entertainment. Researching exhibiting companies and the local Chamber of Commerce can help you understand your own community's strengths.
- When exploring potential careers, keep in mind your individual values, skills, and interests. Recognize that these might change over time, so also keep an open mind.

Activity: Exhibitor Booths to Visit

Students identify exhibitors in their career clusters of interest, read about them, and note those they want to visit on their **Exhibitor Booths to Visit** handout.

Talking Points

- Preparation can improve the time you spend at the *JA Inspire* event. Exploring the companies that will be there and which align most closely with your own interests will give you a more meaningful experience.
- Two recommended self-guided activities on the “gig economy” allow students to explore alternative approaches to work:
 - **What Is the Gig Economy?:** <https://connect.ja.org/work-career-readiness/on-the-job/what-is-th-gig-economy-2>
 - **Gigs Are Everywhere:** <https://connect.ja.org/work-career-readiness/on-the-job/gig-economy/gigs-are-everywhere-2>

Session Five (Virtual Event): Learn from the Experts

Implementation Note: Present this session if students will be attending a virtual *JA Inspire* event. If not, skip to Session Five (In-Person Event).

Optional:

Students can practice their interviewing and communication skills by interacting with the AI Interview Bot.

Big Idea

Focus on what's right for you to build your best future.

Overview

Students review the speakers and webinars at the *JA Inspire* event, create a list of at least three to view, and define what they would like to learn from them.

Objectives

STUDENTS WILL:

- Identify relevant *JA Inspire* speakers and webinars to attend.
- Note facts about the speakers and topics of webinars they will attend.
- Develop questions to consider when watching the speakers and webinars.

Activity: Speakers and Webinars to View

Students review the list of available speakers and webinars and select at least three to view. Remind students to save both of this session's completed student activity handouts.

Talking Points

- This is an opportunity to hear from experts on subjects of interest to you.
- Prioritize your list based on your career interests.
- The virtual *JA Inspire* event allows you to revisit the speakers and webinars if you run out of time.
- When you submit questions or otherwise interact at the virtual *JA Inspire* event, be sure to be courteous and respectful.

Activity: Learn from the Experts

Students complete a What I Know/What I Wonder/What I Learned chart for the speakers and webinars they will attend.

Talking Points

- People working in your field of interest are great resources for career planning.
- Everyone at the *JA Inspire* event was once a middle school student who developed goals and trained for the job they now have.
- When you prepare in advance for an important event, you know what to look for to get the most out of it.

Session Five (In-Person Event): Prepare for the JA Inspire Event

Implementation Note: This teacher-led session is designed to ensure that students are properly prepared for the interactions with exhibitors and students at the in-person event. If students will only be attending a virtual event, skip this session.

Optional:

Students can practice their interviewing and communication skills by interacting with the AI Interview Bot.

Big Idea

Preparation is key to a productive event.

Overview

Students prepare for the in-person *JA Inspire* event by reviewing logistics of the event day and getting ready to make a good first impression when interacting with company representatives.

Objectives

STUDENTS WILL:

- Learn the logistics of attending the in-person event.
- Learn how to conduct themselves at the event and receive a Code of Conduct.
- Learn the importance of networking and create an elevator pitch to help them network at the event.
- Prepare questions that they want to ask and practice asking them.
- Express their expectations of the upcoming event.

Preparation and Materials

- Review the session and the student activity handout, **Prepare for the JA Inspire Event**, located in the Student Guidebook. Participants need a hard copy of this handout to bring to the in-person event. Teachers may choose to have students complete the handout digitally and then print it out, or provide students a hard copy to hand write responses.
- The activities in the **Prepare for the JA Inspire Event** handout are:
 - JA Inspire Elevator Pitch Guide
 - JA Inspire Question Guide
 - JA Code of Conduct
 - Personal Interactions

- Review the **JA Inspire Career Fair Exhibitor** information used by students during Session Four of the Student Guidebook to 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.
- Confirm Internet connection to the AI Interview Bot to ensure students can access.
- Have pens or pencils and blank paper available.

Recommended Time

This session should take 45 minutes to complete.

INTRODUCTION

5 MINUTES

- Give an overview of the in-person *JA Inspire* event, including some logistics. Focus mainly on the content and format of the event, including:
 - Number of companies and careers, with a few examples
 - Structure of the event:
 - How much time students can spend with each career cluster
 - How students will be grouped
 - Keynote speakers or other presentations
 - Other activities, if any

ACTIVITY: CREATING AN ELEVATOR PITCH

15 MINUTES

- Introduce the concept of **networking** and explain that students will have a chance to practice networking at the in-person *JA Inspire* event.
 - ☞ Building relationships with people who can help you find a job and be successful in your career is called networking.
 - ☞ Research shows that networking is the most common way people find a job. It can include letting your friends, family members, and other people you know that you are looking for a job.
- 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.
 - ☞ Your elevator pitch should be a brief overview of what you're good at, passionate about, and qualified to do.

- Explain that students will have an opportunity at the event to tell some exhibitors about themselves. The pitch is a way to do that effectively in less than a minute.
- Let students know that 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:
 - Either have students open their student activity handout on the computer or distribute a printed copy, and have students turn to the **JA Inspire Elevator Pitch Guide**.
 - Ask students to answer the questions 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 AND MAKING A GOOD FIRST IMPRESSION**20 MINUTES**

- Tell students that at the in-person *JA Inspire* event, they will not only get to hear from businesspeople about their jobs and participate in hands-on activities, but they will also have a chance to ask questions.
 - **Being prepared will allow you to learn more information about careers or jobs you might like in the future.**
 - **Preparation is also essential to making a good impression.**
 - **Asking pertinent questions and listening are skills you will need to get and keep a job.**
- (Optional) Share the *JA Inspire* video "Asking the Right Questions": <https://data.ja.org/s/ew4AAA>
- Have students turn to the **JA Inspire Question Guide**.
- Have students review the list of questions and pick some they would like to ask.
- Tell students to add three questions of their own to ask industry professionals.
- Have students refer back to their Session Four handout when writing specific questions to ask the companies that they identified an interest in visiting at the *JA Inspire* event.
- Find out what students are most curious about.
 - Ask for a volunteer to share one question they chose from the list. Ask why they want 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?
- Remind students that:
 - It's natural to be nervous.
 - Interviewing takes practice.
 - They will have the opportunity to ask their questions with the professionals they meet at the *JA Inspire* event.
- Have students turn to **JA Code of Conduct**.
 - 💬 This code of conduct gives you guidelines for behavior at the in-person event.
- Tell students that they will encounter many different people, including some who might be different from them.
- Explain that everyone will be expected to act professionally, as they would act in a workplace.
 - 💬 The purpose of this event is to introduce you to new people and ideas. Use this opportunity to have positive and informative conversations. And be sure to treat everyone you meet with courtesy and respect.
- Have students turn to **Personal Interactions**.
 - 💬 At the *JA Inspire* event, you will take notes on these handouts.
- (Optional) Tell students they will see a video about meeting businesspeople from their community and the importance of making a good first impression.
 - 💬 This video shows you what employers look for when they talk to students and potential employees.
 - Share the *JA Inspire* video "Interacting to Learn": <https://data.ja.org/s/eg4AAA>

WRAP-UP

5 MINUTES

- Ask students to share their observations with the group and to discuss the upcoming event.
 - ? What are you most excited about?
 - ? Do you have any concerns?
 - ? What do you hope to get out of the event?
- If students have Internet access, encourage them to do additional research on their top three companies before the event.
- Encourage students to practice their elevator pitches and the questions they selected and created.
- Remind students to bring their handouts to the in-person *JA Inspire* event and to record notes from their interactions with company representatives.
- Tell students they will complete a reflection on their experiences after the *JA Inspire* event.
- Review the event logistics with students:
 - Where to meet
 - What time to meet
 - Guidelines for behavior
 - Items to bring or not bring—for example, bring your handouts but don't bring any of your electronic devices
- **Note:** If classroom management or special needs are a concern, consider preassigning students to small groups. Let students know which group they will be in and let the event coordinator know in advance that you have assigned groups.

Session Six: Visit the JA Inspire Event

Big Idea

Stay on track. Organize and document your experience. Behave respectfully.

Overview

In this session, students attend the *JA Inspire* event.

Objectives

STUDENTS WILL:

- Attend the event.
- Visit exhibits at the *JA Inspire* event.
- (Virtual *JA Inspire* event only) Attend speeches and webinars.
- (Virtual *JA Inspire* event only) Complete the What I Learned section of the chart from their **Learn from the Experts** handout.
- (In-Person *JA Inspire* event only) Engage with exhibitors and document what they learn.

Session Seven: JA Inspire Personal Reflection

Big Idea

It takes time to process new information and reassess plans.

Overview

Students reflect on what they have learned and identify next steps to further define their academic choices and career path.

Objectives

STUDENTS WILL:

- Evaluate personal goals and priorities based on their experiences in the *JA Inspire* program.
- Identify next steps, including exploration of high school coursework and other research.

Video: Reflection and Next Steps

Students will access the video in their digital student guidebook. You can preview the video at <https://data.ja.org/s/VAkAAA>.

Activity: Reflection

Students reflect individually about *JA Inspire*. Remind them to save their completed student activity handout.

Talking Points

- Referring to the career assessment when you review your notes from the event helps keep you focused on careers that could be right for you.
- *JA Inspire* was just the beginning of a thoughtful process that will help you plan your education and career path. Now, it's time to think about everything you have learned and ways you can use that knowledge in the future.
- Achieving career goals and getting a first job requires thought and planning. That means you need to:
 - Understand the education or training required.
 - Develop the required soft and technical skills—for example, problem solving, creative thinking, math, writing ability, presentation skills, and public speaking.
 - Continue to develop connections with adults who can advise you and help you get an internship or a job.

Conclusion

- Congratulate the students on their success. Encourage them to review their career assessment results as they consider academic courses for next year and beyond.
- Have students complete the post-program survey. You will need to provide the links, which are found on the Student Materials sheet.
- Remind students to explore the self-guided activities on JA Connect: <https://connect.ja.org/>.
- Your JA Area will provide you with a survey to give feedback about your experience. Please take a moment to complete the survey. Your comments will help improve the quality of Junior Achievement programs.