

# Informational Interviews & Job Shadows

## Informational Interviews

**What:** Informational interviews are an excellent way to learn more about an occupation or career field that you are interested in. They provide an opportunity to talk to someone already working in the field so you can learn about their experience and gain information about the occupation, educational requirements, related careers, and so much more.

It is important to remember that informational interviews are NOT a job interview. They are an opportunity to gather information and advice about the career field.

**Who:** Think about friends, family, relatives, employers, co-workers, teachers, coaches, or professionals you know or interact with (such as your health care provider or a local business owner). Your school counselor, career center or teachers can also help you find people to talk to.

**How:** Interviews are usually about 30 minutes. They can occur in-person or over the phone, email or Zoom.



## Job Shadows

**What:** Job shadows are an unpaid opportunity to observe a professional in their place of work. They are an excellent opportunity to see professional work environments and day-to-day professional duties.

**Who:** Job shadows can be an excellent follow-up to an informational interview. If appropriate, you can ask the interviewee if it would be possible for you to do a short job shadow at their place of work. Usually a couple of hours to a day is typical.

## Reaching out

- Reach out over the phone or email.
- Introduce yourself with your name, school, and area of interest.
- Share why you are interested in the career field or occupation.
- Clearly state that you are asking for an informational interview or job shadow.
- Respect the person's time by showing up on time, sticking to your agreed schedule, and contacting them if you need to reschedule or cancel.
- Be professional in your dress, communication, and behavior. Put your cell phone away. Remember they are doing you a favor. Plus, this interaction may open doors for your future.
- Come with prepared questions and take notes.
- Follow-up with a thank you email.

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## Sample Outreach Email

Hello...

My name is..., and I am a Junior at Oregon High School. I am interested in pursuing a degree and career in marketing. I think I would really enjoy the opportunity to work in business because I love working with people and solving problems. My favorite class in high school has been my Business 101 elective.

I would love to connect with you briefly for an informational interview over Zoom. I would appreciate about 20 minutes of your time to ask questions about your career and how you got to where you are in this field. I am flexible and can work around your schedule.

I look forward to hearing back from you and, hopefully, being able to connect with you in the near future. Thank you so much for your time.

Respectfully,

## Possible Informational Interview Questions

- What do you enjoy most and least about your job?
- What does a typical day at work look like for you?
- How did you get started in this field?
- Are there related jobs or careers I should consider?
- What skills or personal attributes are needed to be successful in this field?
- What education, training or certifications do I need for this field?
- What advice do you have for someone starting out in this field?
- What high school classes would be valuable for this field?
- What options are there for career advancement in this field?
- What is the best way to get experience in this field for someone just starting out?
- What is the work culture like in this field?
- If you were starting over again, would you choose the same path for yourself?
- What can someone in this field expect in terms of wages? (Do not directly ask about their income)
- What else would be important for me to think about in regards to this career?
- Do you know of any job shadow opportunities for this field?
- Who else would you suggest I connect with to learn more about this field?