

# Career Interest Interview

**Unit:** World of Work Skills

**Problem Area:** Map Career Paths

**Lesson:** Career Interest Interview

- **Student Learning Objectives.** Instruction in this lesson should result in students achieving the following objectives:

- 1 Prepare to conduct an informational interview.**
- 2 Identify people to interview.**
- 3 Evaluate the key questions to ask at the informational interview.**

- **List of Resources.** The following resources may be useful in teaching this lesson:

“Fast Company,” *Fast Company Journal*. Accessed May 15, 2008.  
<<http://www.fastcompany.com>>.

“Informational Interviewing Tutorial,” *Quintessential Careers*. Accessed May 13, 2008. <[http://www.quintcareers.com/information\\_interview.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/information_interview.html)>.

Kimbrell, Grady, and Ben S. Vineyard. *Succeeding in the World of Work*. Glencoe/McGraw-Hill, 2008.

Miller, Roger LeRoy, and Alan D. Stafford. *Economic Education for Consumers*, 3rd ed. Thomson South-Western, 2006.



## ■ **List of Equipment, Tools, Supplies, and Facilities**

- ✓ Overhead or PowerPoint projector
- ✓ Visual(s) from accompanying master(s)
- ✓ Copies of sample test, lab sheet(s), and/or other items designed for duplication
- ✓ Materials listed on duplicated items
- ✓ Computers with printers and Internet access
- ✓ Classroom resource and reference materials

## ■ **Terms.** The following terms are presented in this lesson (shown in bold italics):

- ▶ aptitude
- ▶ benefits
- ▶ career
- ▶ informational interview
- ▶ lifestyle
- ▶ skills

## ■ **Interest Approach.** Use an interest approach that will prepare the students for the lesson. Teachers often develop approaches for their unique class and student situation. A possible approach is included here.

*Ask the students to list all the careers they have encountered over the past few days. List them on the board. (Possible answers may include teacher, police officer, custodian, bus driver, fast food worker, disc jockey, or nurse.)*

*Lead a discussion about how the people listed decided to pursue that particular career. (Possible answers may include family business, interest in that field, parent/teacher encouragement, conducive to time schedule, did not require college, etc.)*

*Ask the students how they would go about learning more about careers in which they are interested in pursuing. Write those ideas on the board. (Possible answers may include using the Internet, consulting libraries/books, interviewing people in that career, or job shadowing.)*

# SUMMARY OF CONTENT AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

**Objective 1:** Prepare to conduct an informational interview.

**Anticipated Problem:** What is an informational interview?

- I. An **informational interview** is a formal interview with a person in a career area of interest. The informational interview is a good way to explore an organization for which a student may wish to work in the future. A **career** is a series of related jobs built on a common foundation of interest, knowledge, training, and experience. To conduct a successful informational interview, an individual must present himself or herself well; look and sound like the kind of person who can do the job; and dress like the kind of person who does the job. The person a student interviews may be a potential employer or referral.
  - A. Reasons to conduct an informational interview
    1. To explore careers
    2. To gain a better understanding of an occupation or industry
    3. To determine educational and training requirements
    4. To network with others in the field of interest
    5. To polish interview skills
    6. To gain confidence and poise before engaging in a high-stakes job interview
  - B. Informational interviews result in knowledge about:
    1. Day-to-day activities of the job
    2. Various occupations, jobs, or specialties within a field of interest
    3. Career goals and how to focus them
    4. New jobs in a career field
    5. Personal career strengths and weaknesses
    6. Different ways to prepare for a job and/or a career

*Use VM–A to illustrate how to dress for the informational interview. Locate articles online (e.g., <http://www.monster.com> or <http://www.careerbuilder.com>) regarding appropriate interview attire and etiquette. Distribute copies for the class to read, and follow up with a discussion.*

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**Objective 2:** Identify people to interview.**Anticipated Problem:** How do you identify potential people to interview?

- II. Students are in contact with numerous people on a daily basis. The people with whom we communicate frequently or their friends/acquaintances may be able to assist in sharing career-related information. The identification process requires students to think about who they know and maybe even who those people know.
  - A. Listing people who work in a career of interest
    1. Friends
    2. Family
    3. Co-workers (present and former)
    4. Neighbors
    5. Alumni associations of high schools (graduates working in a career of interest)
  - B. Receiving assistance from guidance or career counselors
    1. Career guidance tests
    2. Interest inventories
  - C. Finding organizations and businesses related to the career of interest
    1. Phonebook
    2. Internet Web sites
    3. Professional organizations related to specific careers
    4. Companies that employ people in a career field of interest
    5. Chamber of Commerce
    6. Trade magazines and journals (e.g., *Fast Company*, *Crain's Chicago Business*, *Forbes*, *Gourmet*, etc.)
  - D. Making contact and arranging the interview
    1. Mutual acquaintance introduction/referral: Friends and family can assist in setting up an informational interview. People are often more willing to talk with someone with whom they have a connection. After the initial contact is made, the student should call to arrange a date and a time for the interview.
    2. Letter: Sending a letter is the most common way to request an informational interview. A letter is courteous and allows the business or organization time to check the schedule before responding. The letter should tell the business who is requesting the interview, the purpose of the meeting, and an estimate of the length of time for the interview. The writer could mention how he or she learned about the business (e.g., school, friend, family, trade journal, or Web site), which adds credibility to the letter. The last part of the letter should state a time at which the writer will call for a response to the letter.
    3. Telephone call: Calling is faster, but it may be a more stressful way to set up an interview. The same type of information included in the letter is necessary in a phone call. Immediately following "Hello," the caller should mention his or

her name (“Hello Ms. Brown, my name is June Eldridge.”) and then ask if it is a good time for the businessperson to talk. If it is a good time, the caller can relay the information (as in the letter).

*Bring in a local phonebook. Show the students all the listings for different career areas (i.e., attorneys and accountants). Prepare a short list of local, state, and national Web sites for students to review. Use VM–B to review the elements of a written and/or a telephone contact for a potential interview.*

**Objective 3:** Evaluate the key questions to ask at the informational interview.

**Anticipated Problem:** What are sample informational interview questions?

- III. Sometimes it is difficult to know what to say or ask when interviewing an individual. As a result, it is best to be prepared with some sample informational interview questions, such as:
- A. What type of training or education is required for this position?
  - B. Please describe a typical day at work.
  - C. What effect does this career have on an individual’s lifestyle? (**Lifestyle** is the way a person uses time, energy, and resources).
  - D. What interests you about this type of work?
  - E. What jobs or courses would help a person prepare for this career?
  - F. What skills and aptitudes are necessary to succeed in this career? (**Skills** are the things a person knows how to do. **Aptitude** is a potential for learning a certain skill.)
  - G. What is the best part of your job? What is the worst part of your job?
  - H. What is the occupational outlook for this career? What is the demand?
    - I. What responsibilities are associated with this career? (e.g., supervision, scheduling workers, liaison with other departments, or report writing)
  - J. What advice would you give someone preparing to enter this career?
  - K. What is the salary range for this career?
  - L. What, if any, benefits are associated with this career? (**Benefits** are employment extras, such as health insurance, paid vacations, and retirement plans.)
  - M. If you had to do it all over again, would you select the same career? Why, or why not?

*Use VM–C as a visual or as a handout. Use LS–A as student practice to create informational interview questions. You may have students read “Informational Interviewing Tutorial,” which can be found at <[http://www.quintcareers.com/information\\_interview.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/information_interview.html)>.*

- **Review/Summary.** Use the student learning objectives to summarize the lesson. Have students explain the content associated with each objective. Student responses can be used in determining which objectives need to be reviewed or taught from a different angle. Questions at the ends of chapters in the textbook may also be used in the review/summary.
- **Application.** Use the included visual masters and lab sheet to apply the information presented in the lesson.
- **Evaluation.** Evaluation should focus on student achievement of the objectives for the lesson. Various techniques can be used, such as student performance on the application activities. A sample written test is provided.

## ■ **Answers to Sample Test:**

### **Part One: Matching**

1. d
2. b
3. a
4. c
5. e
6. f

### **Part Two: Short Answer**

1. Reasons for conducting an informational interview include (any two of the following): exploring careers, gaining a better understanding of an occupation or an industry, learning what education and training a career requires, and networking with others in the field of interest.
2. You can look up professional organizations and companies employing that career field.

### **Part Three: Completion**

1. education
2. list
3. Internet
4. occupation
5. outlook

# Career Interest Interview

## ► Part One: Matching

**Instructions:** Match the term with the correct definition.

- |             |                            |
|-------------|----------------------------|
| a. skills   | d. career                  |
| b. benefits | e. informational interview |
| c. aptitude | f. lifestyle               |

- \_\_\_\_ 1. A series of related jobs built on a foundation of interest, knowledge, training, and experience
- \_\_\_\_ 2. Employment extras, such as health insurance, paid vacations, and retirement plans
- \_\_\_\_ 3. Things you know how to do
- \_\_\_\_ 4. The potential to learn a certain skill
- \_\_\_\_ 5. A formal interview with a person in a career area of interest
- \_\_\_\_ 6. The way a person uses time, energy, and resources

## ► Part Two: Short Answer

**Instructions:** Complete the following.

1. What are two reasons for conducting an informational interview?



2. How can a phonebook help identify people to interview?

► **Part Three: Completion**

**Instructions:** Provide the word or words to complete the following statements.

1. One reason to conduct an informational interview is to find out what \_\_\_\_\_ and training a career requires.
2. You can identify people to interview by writing a \_\_\_\_\_ of people you already know.
3. Using the \_\_\_\_\_ can help you to identify professional organizations and companies employing people in that career field.
4. Another reason for conducting an informational interview is to gain a better understanding of a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ or industry.
5. One important question to ask in the interview is, “What is the occupational \_\_\_\_\_ for this career?”



# HOW TO DRESS FOR AN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

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# SAMPLE LETTER REQUESTING AN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

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June Eldridge  
2550 Park Street  
Elmwood, WI 00000  
555.444.5656  
jeldridge@emailaddress.com

September 3, 20--

Ms. Elizabeth Brown  
Food Sanitation Inspector  
Wayne County Health Department  
Elmwood, WI 00000

Dear Ms. Brown:

I am a student at Elmwood High School. Our class is currently researching careers to learn which ones would be good choices for us. I am interested in becoming a Public Health Food Sanitation Inspector and would appreciate the opportunity to talk with you about your job.

A recent article in the *Elmwood Free Press*, "Salmonella Outbreak at the Fourth of July Picnic," quotes you as the chief investigator. After reading the article and learning a bit more about the Wayne County Health Department, I am sure your insight and first-hand experiences would help me make a decision about a career in public health.

I will phone your office on Wednesday, Sept. 10, to request an appointment. The meeting and interview would take approximately 25 minutes.

Thank you for considering my request.

Sincerely,

(signature)

June Eldridge

# SAMPLE INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

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- A. What type of training or education is required for this position?
- B. Please describe a typical day at work.
- C. What effect does this career have on an individual's lifestyle?
- D. What interests you about this type of work?
- E. What jobs or courses would help a person prepare for this career?
- F. What skills and aptitudes are necessary to succeed in this career?
- G. What is the best part of your job? What is the worst part of your job?
- H. What is the occupational outlook for this career? What is the demand?
- I. What responsibilities are associated with this career? (e.g., supervision, scheduling workers, liaison with other departments, or report writing)
- J. What advice would you give someone preparing to enter this career?
- K. What is the salary range for this career?
- L. What, if any, benefits are associated with this career?
- M. If you had to do it all over again, would you select the same career? Why, or why not?

# Informational Interview Questions

## Purpose

The purpose of this activity is to prepare for an informational interview.

## Objective

Develop questions to ask during an informational interview.

## Materials

- ◆ lab sheet
- ◆ writing utensil

## Procedure

1. Select a career that is of interest to you.
  
2. Imagine you are about to finish high school and are preparing to begin this career or to study for this career. Identify two people in this career to interview. Indicate their names and their place of employment.
  
3. Using the list of questions on VM-C, select about five questions that would help you gain more information. Add at least five additional questions of your own creation.

