



JA Inspire

Workforce Development | Financial Literacy | Entrepreneurship

Teacher Guide





TEACHER GUIDE

VIDEO SESSIONS

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 even before students enter 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 conclusion of **JA Inspire**, students should be excited about their future. They will have a better understanding of the courses they need to take in school, a plan for post-secondary education, and a clear pathway to a career.

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.

DESCRIPTION

JA Inspire 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 a job. The event is designed to transform students' abstract ideas about work into tangible ambitions and plans, and to build their soft skills.

The **JA Inspire** curriculum is supported by six professional videos, developed by JA of Kentuckiana.

JA USA YouTube Playlist:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL7wv-vSe9kafOMCnxVoGbQOcwSDaCE13q>

1. Why is Career Planning Important: <https://youtu.be/t5QPFevzw-0>
2. Developing a Career Plan: <https://youtu.be/dtTiFQID2ts>
3. Interacting to Learn: <https://youtu.be/etqxcW60EPE>
4. Asking the Right Questions: <https://youtu.be/517HJhQVWK0>
5. What to Expect: <https://youtu.be/vwdBH8Mw7UU>
6. Reflection and Next Steps <https://youtu.be/0CP4zZLbiQg>

The first five videos prepare students to take full advantage of the event—volunteers from businesses expect that students will arrive at the event with an idea of the careers they want to explore, and the skills they need to get information about them. The sixth video is for reflection following the event. Here is how to use the videos.

- Show each video and then lead a group discussion with the students to reinforce the major points. One video may be shown per class period or multiple videos may be utilized in a session. A **minimum** of two class periods is needed to effectively prepare students and cover the required content prior to the event.

PREPARATION

You are the link between the classroom learning and the *JA Inspire* event. Review the instructional materials for each session and learn as much as possible about your JA Area's event and the participating companies.

You may want to ask students to take a career interest inventory before the event. You can use your school's preferred program, [JA USA's career assessment](#) options found on the JA My Way website, or <https://career.ja.org/locations/108204>. These assessments may enhance the success of the program by allowing students to explore their skills, interests, work priorities,



and the employment outlook for specific jobs. Note that some options require access to the Internet.

Consider allowing students to role-play the proper behaviors for speaking and interacting with business professionals before attending the *JA Inspire* event:

- Have good posture.
- Make eye contact.
- Have a proper handshake.
- Speak up and speak clearly.
- Listen to their responses.
- Take notes.

If possible, give students additional time to research the participating companies or encourage them to spend time outside of class to learn more about them.

Students will receive a workbook to use at the event. Let your students know in advance if they will receive a class grade for their participation in *JA Inspire*, which may be based on taking notes in their workbooks.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Your JA Area will provide additional resources, in printed form or online, and we encourage you to use these with your students. For example:

- List of exhibitors and a link to each exhibitor's website
- Exhibitor Floor Map
- Video Library
- JA My Way web link, where students can explore their interests and abilities or create a resume



VIDEO 1

WHY IS CAREER PLANNING IMPORTANT?

Students begin to prepare for the *JA Inspire* event. The video provides context and motivation, as they learn about the importance of a goal and a plan. They also start to understand the importance of self-awareness.

In addition to discussing the video, you might cover the basics about the event. At *JA Inspire*, students will:

- See what people do on the job and what careers are available.
- Explore businesses to learn about jobs, what people studied to prepare for work, how people got their first job, and why they like the careers they have chosen.

DISCUSSION

- Share the following scenario. You are walking into school and a teacher stops you to ask, “What courses are you taking?” She then asks, “Why are you taking them?”
- Ask if anyone knows of a job that he or she would like to have in the future. Ask each student who responds to say a little about what that job would be like and why it would be a good choice.
- Ask for a show of hands using the questions from the video. What activities were they drawn to? Why? Why do others seem challenging?

VIDEO 2

DEVELOPING A CAREER PLAN

Students learn more about the importance of a career plan that matches their interests and talents with potential opportunities. The video also helps them understand that each person is different and that understanding personal preferences is critical to success. A plan needs to be flexible and, along the way, there will be setbacks and even failures. Having a goal and connecting with mentors will help.

DISCUSSION

- Ask for a show of hands using the questions in the video. **Ask students how many of them:**
 - Like to be inside? Outside?
 - Like to work with people? Alone?
 - Like to work with their hands? Prefer to read and learn?
 - Like to compete?
 - See themselves as creative?
 - Prefer math and science to other subjects?

ACTIVITY 1: MAKING A MATCH

Students assess their skills and interests in the context of the event.

1. Using the Career Cluster Cards, students choose three Career Clusters they have an interest in and research companies in those Career Clusters online.
2. Students break into pairs and take turns telling each other which companies attracted them and why.
3. Ask for a few students to volunteer to tell the whole group about the companies and careers that interest them the most. Discuss what they learned.



ACTIVITY 2: ONLINE RESEARCH

Students spend time exploring the companies and jobs they will interact with at the **JA Inspire** event.

1. Review with students the list of career clusters and careers that will be represented at the event.
2. Have students do the research individually or in pairs.
3. Ask students to talk about the careers that are a good match for their talents and interests.

VIDEO 3

INTERACTING TO LEARN

Students may have heard of soft skills, but this video redefines them as critical skills. A student's presence on social media, ability to interact, and physical appearance all affect success. You may want to print and distribute a copy of the **JA Inspire Dos and Don'ts**, included at the end of this guide. (A copy is also provided in the student workbook.)

DISCUSSION

- Using recent articles about social media and personal reputation from the popular press (especially magazines and online sites geared to teens), discuss:
 - Social media posts last a long time and can damage your reputation.
 - Employers are using social media to evaluate candidates before giving them an interview.
 - What is the appropriate use of social media?
- Using examples of well-known people, discuss having a personal brand.

ACTIVITY 1: SOFT SKILLS

Students reflect on their current skills, including strengths and areas for improvement. While the video references skills that students will utilize on the day of the *JA Inspire* event, it's important to spend some time exploring soft skills critical to future work and career success.

1. Explain that students need to develop their skills to be able to get and keep a job. In this activity, they will look at skills employers want and begin to understand what they have to offer.
2. Have students do the activity:
 - Designate one wall of the classroom as "Strong" and the opposite wall as "Needs Improvement."
 - Tell students that you will read aloud a soft skill that is needed in the workplace. Students will consider whether they are generally strong at that skill or if they need

improvement before they enter the world of work. Students must move to the side of the room that matches their assessment—they cannot stay in the middle.

- Read a workplace scenario related to that soft skill. Have students consider whether their self-assessment changes based on that specific scenario. They should move to the other side of the room if it does.
- Allow students to offer evidence or comment on the soft skills and scenarios throughout the activity.

SOFT SKILLS AND WORKPLACE SCENARIOS

- Responsibility:
 - I take personal responsibility for my actions.
 - One hour before I am scheduled to be at work, my ride cancels. I know that I am responsible for finding another ride to work, even if it is inconvenient or uncomfortable for me.
- Perseverance:
 - I persevere (keep trying) even when conditions are unpleasant, or I am discouraged.
 - I was being considered for a promotion and I believe I was the best candidate for the job. My company gave the promotion to someone else, but I still keep a positive attitude and do my job well.
- Initiative:
 - I see what needs to be done and do it without being told by others.
 - I was given four hours to complete a task. I was almost finished after two hours, when a coworker told me to slow down or the boss would give me more work. I finished early and took the initiative to do the other work without being asked.
- Leadership:
 - I can positively influence others when necessary.



- My coworkers were complaining loudly about work and gossiping about other workers while customers were nearby. I persuaded them to talk about a more positive subject and lower their voices.
3. Ask students to reflect on the activity and choose one soft skill they already have to offer an employer.
 4. Emphasize that these skills are valued by almost all employers regardless of the specific job.
 5. Remind students that it usually takes years to get the education and develop the skills needed for a career.

ACTIVITY 2: ELEVATOR PITCH

The video focuses on building a personal brand. At the event, students will get a chance to tell the company volunteers about themselves.

1. Describe an elevator pitch.
 - An elevator pitch is a brief, high-energy presentation that individuals and companies use to promote themselves and their products.
 - The elevator pitch is an effective way to make an introduction and it should last no more than 20 to 30 seconds.
2. Have students create their elevator pitch.
 - Distribute copies of How to Craft an Elevator Pitch to students.
 - Ask students to read the page, answer the questions, and create their elevator pitch.
 - Circulate, making sure that students are making progress.
3. Time permitting, have students team up in pairs or groups of four and practice presenting their elevator pitches to one another.

VIDEO 4

ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

At the **JA Inspire** event, students will not only get to hear from business volunteers about their jobs, they will also have a chance to ask questions. Ideally, students will have had time to research companies before they view this video. If not, students focus on generic questions.

DISCUSSION

- Ask the following questions:
 - Why is it important to be prepared to answer questions in an interview?
 - Why is it important to be prepared to ask good questions?
 - What do you think makes a question “good?”
 - In the video, one person said that an interviewer is “trying to hire his next boss.” What did he mean?

ACTIVITY 1: PREPARING YOUR QUESTIONS

Students identify the questions they want to ask participating companies.

1. Hand out the *JA Inspire Questions Guide*. Students should pick three questions from the list. Tell them to add three questions of their own to ask industry professionals. Also, they should add any relevant, job-specific questions for careers that will be represented at the *JA Inspire* event.
2. Find out what students are most curious about. Ask for a student to share one question.
 - Why does he or she want to know more about that?
 - Does anyone else have the same question? Why?
 - Does anyone have different questions for a specific company? What are they?

ACTIVITY 2: ROLE-PLAY

1. Distribute a copy of the **JA Inspire Dos and Don'ts** handout.
 - Organize students into pairs.



- Allow students a few minutes to review the handout.
 - Ask student pairs to take turns being the interviewer and the interviewee, asking and answering questions from their *JA Inspire Questions Guide* list. 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.
2. Find out what students are most curious about. Ask for a volunteer to share one question.
 3. 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 *JA Inspire*.



VIDEO 5

WHAT TO EXPECT AT JA INSPIRE

Students learn about the event (the content and format, logistics, and your expectations) and have a chance to discuss what they want to accomplish.

Students will need access to their JA Inspire Student Guide provided by your JA Staff.

DISCUSSION

- Discuss the event.
 - What are you most excited about?
 - What are your questions or concerns?
 - What do you hope to get out of it?
- Discuss 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 you 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.
 - The **JA Inspire** event is an opportunity to try out networking skills.
- Review event logistics.
 - How to log into the event platform.
 - What students will do during the virtual exploration.
 - Behavior expectations when using the virtual platform.

VIDEO 6

REFLECTION AND NEXT STEPS

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

Note: Consider ways to ensure that students can integrate this knowledge with your curriculum and use their learning beyond the duration of *JA Inspire* as they prepare for the future. The My Plan tool provided in the **Personal Reflections** handout may serve as a starting point for future exploration.

DISCUSSION

- Congratulate students on their successful participation.
- Ask students about their experience. Utilize the following questions to get the conversation started.
 - Was the event what you expected? Why or why not?
 - What surprised you?
 - What did you like best?
 - What new ideas do you have about your future career?

ACTIVITY 1: REFLECTION

Students summarize their experience and start working on a career plan.

1. Distribute the Personal Reflections handout.
2. Instruct students fill out Part 1: Event Summary.
3. Encourage them to think about their self-assessment and to refer to the notes they took at the event.
4. Circulate to answer questions. Allow 15 minutes for students to complete their summary.
5. Ask if anyone would like to share his or her thoughts.
6. Let students know that achieving their career goals and getting a first job requires thought and planning. That means they will need to:

- Pick their high school courses deliberately.
 - Understand the education or training required.
 - Develop the required skills; e.g., creative thinking, math skills, writing ability, presentation skills, public speaking.
 - Continue to develop connections with adults who can advise them and help them get an internship or a job.
7. Ask students to look more closely at one career that interests them.
- Pick one career and fill out Part 2: My Plan.
 - Discuss what they learned.

ACTIVITY 2: THANK YOU NOTES

Note: Students write thank you notes to practice good business etiquette and communication skills. You should decide if you want them to write to the company, they found most interesting, or have all the students write to one company. Your JA Area representative can help you deliver the notes.

1. Explain that one of the most important tasks students can do to enhance their personal brand and leave a positive impression with potential employers is to send a thank you note after an interview.
2. Describe that a good note:
 - Talks about the specific company and the experience.
 - Mentions a particular learning experience or interaction with a volunteer that made a difference to the student.
 - Tells how the experience had a positive effect on the student's future.
 - Expresses appreciation.
3. Have students write their notes. You may want to suggest changes to the notes before the students send them.

JA INSPIRE CAREER CLUSTER CARDS

CAREER CLUSTER TITLE	CAREER CLUSTER DESCRIPTION	CAREER CLUSTER JOB EXAMPLES
Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources	Careers related to all aspects of agricultural products and resources, including plant and animal products and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmer/Rancher • Veterinarian • Water Quality Manager
Architecture and Construction	Careers for those who design, plan, manage, build, and maintain structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Architect • Electrician • Surveyor
Arts, Audio/Video Technology, and Communications	Professionals who design, produce, exhibit, perform, write, and publish multimedia content, such as within the arts, journalism, and entertainment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actor • Animator • Desktop Publisher • Telecommunications Specialist
Business Management and Administration	Careers for those who plan, organize, lead, and evaluate functions for running a business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountant • Human Resources Manager • Sports/Entertainment • Manager

CAREER CLUSTER TITLE	CAREER CLUSTER DESCRIPTION	CAREER CLUSTER JOB EXAMPLES
Education and Training	Careers related to all aspects of education, training, and learning-support services, such as administration and professional support services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coach • Social Worker • Teacher
Finance	Professionals who provide services for financial and investment planning, banking, insurance, and business financial management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actuary • Loan Officer • Tax Preparer
Government and Public Administration	Professionals who plan and execute government functions at the local, state, and federal levels, including national security, foreign service, planning, revenue and taxation, and regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambassador • Police Officer • Tax Attorney
Health Science	Careers for those who provide and manage therapeutic services, diagnostic services, health information, support services, and biotechnology research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) • Home Health Aide • Nutritionist



CAREER CLUSTER TITLE	CAREER CLUSTER DESCRIPTION	CAREER CLUSTER JOB EXAMPLES
<p>Hospitality and Tourism</p>	<p>Professionals who assist people with their recreational and entertainment needs in the restaurant industry, food/beverage services, lodging, travel and tourism, and amusement and attractions industries</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Service Manager • Pastry/Specialty Chef • Tour/Travel Coordinator
<p>Human Services</p>	<p>Careers related to families and human needs, such as counseling and mental health services, community services, personal care, and consumer services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cosmetologist • Insurance Representative • Licensed Professional Counselor
<p>Information Technology (IT)</p>	<p>Careers related to the design, development, support, and management of hardware, software, multimedia, and systems integration services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2D/3D Artist • Database Administrator • Webmaster
<p>Law, Public Safety, Corrections, and Security</p>	<p>Professionals who provide or manage legal services, public safety, protective services, and homeland security, including professional and technical support services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attorney • Hazardous Materials Responder • Park Ranger



CAREER CLUSTER TITLE	CAREER CLUSTER DESCRIPTION	CAREER CLUSTER JOB EXAMPLES
<p>Manufacturing</p>	<p>Professionals who process materials into products and related professional and technical support activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assembler • Plumber/Pipe Fitter/ Steam Fitter • Quality Control Technician
<p>Marketing and Sales</p>	<p>Careers related to marketing activities for an organization, such as brand management, professional sales, merchandising, marketing communications, and market research</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art/Graphics Director • Entrepreneur • Sales Executive •
<p>Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)</p>	<p>Professionals who manage and conduct scientific research and professional and technical services (e.g., physical science, social science, engineering), including laboratory and testing services and research and development services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aerospace Engineer • Marine Scientist • Radio/TV Broadcast Technician
<p>Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics</p>	<p>Careers related to the movement of people, materials, and goods by road, pipeline, air, rail, and water, and related professional and technical support services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aviation Inspector • Environmental Scientist/Specialist • Heavy Truck Driver



JA INSPIRE QUESTIONS GUIDE

You need to be prepared to ask the business professionals 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 are not 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: 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 your industry?

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. _____

List additional questions for specific careers or companies.



JA INSPIRE ELEVATOR PITCH GUIDE

1. Prepare ideas for your elevator pitch:

- What matters to you?

- What are you good at?

- What do you have to offer a potential employer?

- What interests you?

- What do you want to be remembered for doing?

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

- What is one thing people should know about you?

2. Compile the basic information for your pitch.

- Your name: _____
- The dream job you would like to have:

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

- Something about yourself that would make a positive and memorable impression:

3. Write your pitch.

JA INSPIRE DOS AND DONT'S

DO	DON'T
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Get a good night's sleep. 2. Take a shower. 3. Dress up. Look like a business person. 4. Check your appearance in a mirror. 5. Mute cell phones and all other digital devices. 6. Be able to show that you know about the company. 7. Remember that first impressions matter. 8. Have a positive attitude. 9. Offer a firm handshake. 10. Get to the point. Express thoughts clearly and simply. 11. Make sure you answer the question you were asked. Don't ramble on. 12. Make eye contact. 13. Smile. 14. Stand tall. Sit straight. 15. Be adaptable. (No job is a perfect fit.) 16. Bring a portfolio with work samples if you have some experience to show off. 17. Follow up with a thank you note or email. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 18. Be late. 19. Chew gum. 20. Wear sunglasses or headgear, such as a hat or bandana. 21. Be sarcastic or disrespectful. 22. Mumble. Slouch. Twitch. 23. Criticize your teachers, fellow students, or former employers. 24. Use a cell phone or other digital device during the event.



JA INSPIRE PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

The **JA Inspire** event was just the beginning of a thoughtful process that will help you plan an education and career path. Now, it's time to think about everything you have learned and ways that you can use that knowledge in the future.

On the next page, you'll see a planning tool consisting of two parts: One will help you summarize what you have learned, and the other will help you identify next steps.

PART 1: EVENT SUMMARY

1. In the column labeled Career Cluster, name the top three career clusters that you learned about, listing one in each row.
2. For each one, complete the next three columns.

PART 2: MY PLAN

1. Pick one career that interests you. Write that career in the first row under the column labeled Career.
2. Fill out the other three columns in that row.
3. Repeat for other careers, in the rows below, as time permits.

CAREER CLUSTER	CAREERS	THREE THINGS I LEARNED ABOUT THIS CAREER CLUSTER	WHY THIS IS A GOOD MATCH FOR MY SKILLS AND INTERESTS



CAREER	SKILLS NEEDED TO SUCCEED IN THIS CAREER	EDUCATION OR TRAINING TO GET STARTED	NEXT STEPS