



# JA Inspire<sup>®</sup>

*Virtual*

## Teacher Guide

for grades 5-12





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*Virtual*

**for grades 5-12**

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Colorado Springs, Colorado

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Thank you for participating in *JA Inspire Virtual* 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 grades 5-12. *JA Inspire Virtual*, 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 career opportunities, are much more likely to take relevant courses, stay in school, and graduate.

At the end of *JA Inspire Virtual*, 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 virtual company exhibits and webinars about careers that interest them.
- Explore post-secondary education options, including apprenticeships and educational funding opportunities.
- Explore soft skills that employers value.
- Create a “brag sheet” listing their career-oriented achievements.
- Develop a personal career plan.

## Description

The *JA Inspire* career fair features learning experiences designed by participants to align with what the industry 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.

Independent, self-guided sessions prior to the career fair prepare students to get the most out of it. 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 virtual guidebook with related fillable PDF worksheets to use before and during the event. In addition to the student guidebook, information about your local JA Area's career fair event will be available to students.

You are the link between the independent learning and the career fair event. Review the student guidebook and worksheets 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. Access the career inventory here: <https://jaaz.pipelineaz.com/> **Note:** To save the results of their Career Interest Inventory or save favorite careers, students must create an account on the site. If students have an existing JA username and password, they can use it to log in. The login for the virtual career fair will only work for the career fair.

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.

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

## Implementation

This is a self-guided, virtual program. Each of the five sessions preceding the career fair event takes about 30–40 minutes. In the sixth session, students should spend at least 45 minutes at the career fair. The final session, reflecting on the event, takes about 30 minutes. Students access the materials online, either at home or in the classroom. The entire program can be completed independently or in class.

If students are completing the sessions in the classroom, you may introduce and/or follow up the activities in the session with the materials in this guide. For each session, you'll find an overview, objectives, and talking points.

Program Overview

Activity and Time (Minutes)	Worksheets	Objectives	Work and Career Readiness Pathway
<p><b>Session One: Career Interests and Your Path</b>                      Teacher Intro (5)                      Developing a Career Plan (intro, video) (10)                      Career Inventory (20)                      Teacher Wrap-Up (5-10)  <i>Recommended: Growth Mindset activities (15)</i></p>	<p>Career Interests and Your Path</p>	<p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider their values, skills, and interests.</li> <li>• Take a Career Inventory</li> <li>• Relate their values, skills, interests, and Career Interest Inventory to future career opportunities.</li> </ul>	<p>Competencies  <b>Career Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess personal skills, abilities, aptitudes, strengths, and weaknesses as they relate to career exploration and development.</li> </ul> <p><b>Decision Making</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze relevant information.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Session Two: Career Planning and Your Path</b>                      Teacher Intro (5)                      Why is Career Planning Important? (intro, video) (10)                      Career Clusters (15)                      Teacher Wrap-Up (5-10)  <i>Recommended: JA Future by Design: Careers (30)</i>  <i>Optional: Advance CTE (20)</i></p>	<p>Career Planning and Your Path</p>	<p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn why career planning is important.</li> <li>• Recognize career clusters.</li> <li>• Identify career clusters that match their skills and interests.</li> <li>• Identify requirements to obtain jobs in fields of interest.</li> </ul>	<p>Career Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply knowledge gained from individual inventory to a comprehensive set of goals and an individual career plan.</li> <li>• Determine the income and earnings potential associated with various education, job, and career options.</li> </ul> <p><b>Critical and Analytical Thinking</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extrapolate from given information and predict or suggest.</li> </ul> <p><b>Decision Making</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze relevant information.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Session Three: Preparing to Meet Your Future</b>                      Teacher Intro (5)                      Soft Skills (15)                      Education, Training, and Apprenticeships (10)                      Preparing to Meet Your Future worksheet (10)                      Teacher Wrap-Up (5-10)</p>	<p>Preparing to Meet Your Future</p>	<p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand why it's important to choose a career where they can be successful and develop a career plan.</li> <li>• Practice soft skills.</li> <li>• Recognize education and training requirements and options for careers of interest, including apprenticeships and educational funding opportunities.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Critical and Analytical Thinking</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Think strategically, using reason and logic.</li> </ul> <p><b>Decision Making</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze relevant information.</li> </ul>

(continued)

Activity and Time (Minutes)	Worksheets	Objectives	Work and Career Readiness Pathway Competencies
<p><b>Session Four: Local Business Means Opportunity</b></p> <p>Teacher Intro (5)                      Research Your Local Economy (15)                      Exhibitor Booths to Visit (15)                      Brag Sheet (15)                      Teacher Wrap-Up (5–10)  <i>Recommended:</i> Gig Economy activities (20)  <i>Recommended:</i> Crafting Your Resume (60)  <i>Recommended:</i> JA Connect Informational Interview activities</p>	<p>Local Business Means Opportunity</p> <p>Exhibitor Booths to Visit</p>	<p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognize traits of their local economy.</li> <li>Identify common career clusters in their area and among <i>JA Inspire</i> career fair exhibitors.</li> <li>Create a list of exhibitors to visit during the career fair.</li> <li>Create a brag sheet.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Critical and Analytical Thinking</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Think strategically, using reason and logic.</li> <li>Extrapolate from given information and predict or suggest.</li> </ul> <p><b>Decision Making</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research appropriate information relevant to decisions.</li> <li>Analyze relevant information.</li> </ul> <p><b>Career Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine the income and earnings potential associated with various education, job, and career options.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Session Five: Learn from the Experts</b></p> <p>Teacher Intro (5)                      Speakers and Webinars to View (15)                      Learn from the Experts (20)                      Teacher Wrap-Up (5–10)</p>	<p>Speakers and Webinars to View</p> <p>Learn from the Experts</p>	<p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify relevant <i>JA Inspire</i> career fair speakers and webinars to attend.</li> <li>Note facts about the speakers and topics of webinars they will attend.</li> <li>Develop questions to consider when watching the speakers and webinars.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Critical and Analytical Thinking</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Think strategically, using reason and logic.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Session Six: Visit the JA Inspire Career Fair</b></p> <p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visit exhibits at the <i>JA Inspire</i> career fair.</li> <li>Attend speeches and webinars at the career fair.</li> <li>Complete the What I Learned section of the chart from their <b>Learn from the Experts</b> worksheet.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Critical and Analytical Thinking</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Think strategically, using reason and logic.</li> <li>Extrapolate from given information and predict or suggest.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Session Seven: JA Inspire Personal Reflection</b></p> <p>Teacher Intro (5)                      Reflection and Next Steps (intro, video) (10)                      Personal Reflection (25)                      Teacher Wrap-Up (10–15)  <i>Recommended:</i> JA Connect Learning Platform career planning activities</p>	<p><i>JA Inspire</i> Personal Reflection</p>	<p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate personal goals and priorities based on their experiences in the <i>JA Inspire Virtual</i> program.</li> <li>Identify next steps, including exploration of post-secondary education and networking opportunities.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Critical and Analytical Thinking</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Think strategically, using reason and logic.</li> <li>Extrapolate from given information and predict or suggest.</li> </ul>



# Session One: Career Interests and Your Path

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## 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 inventory 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://youtu.be/dtTiFQID2ts>.

## Activity: Career Inventory

Students take an online career assessment, found in the JA Digital Career Book:

<https://jaaz.pipelineaz.com/>

It is highly recommended that students log in to JA Digital Career Book so that they can save the results of their Career Interest Inventory and save favorite careers. If students have a JA login from other JA courses, this login will work here. (Note that the login is different than the one used for the virtual career fair.) If students do not have a JA login, they can **Register** and then **Login**. Students registering themselves must be able to receive email at the email address used to register in order to create a password.

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.

You must register and log in to save your results.

Login or Register



Take the inventory

[Already have a Score ?](#)

## 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.
- Feel free to share a story about how you made your own career choices.
- Three self-guided activities students can do to extend learning:
  - **What Is a Growth Mindset?:** <https://connect.ja.org/work-career-readiness/on-the-job/growth-mindset/what-is-a-growth-mindset/what-is-a-growth-mindset-2>
  - **How to Develop a Growth Mindset:** <https://connect.ja.org/work-career-readiness/on-the-job/growth-mindset/how-to-develop-a-growth-mindset2>
  - **Make the Match:** <https://connect.ja.org/work-career-readiness/plan-your-path/job-search/make-the-match>

**Note:** The activities can be found on the JA Connect™ Learning Pathways. Intermediate- and advanced-level activities require a login. Students can self-register on the site. If students have a JA login from other JA courses or from JA Digital Career Book, this login will work here. Otherwise students can self-register as long as they can receive email at the address used to register in order to create a password. (The login is different than the one used for the virtual career fair.)

# Session Two: Career Planning And Your Path

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## 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://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6iM7oA\\_q5k8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6iM7oA_q5k8).

## Activity: Career Clusters

Students explore career clusters, with an emphasis on the ones that align to their own career interests.

## 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.
- The Advance CTE (Career Technical Education) website has useful information about career clusters. Let students know if their school offers a CTE program.
- *JA Future by Design: Careers* is an app that allows students to further explore future career options. The app is located on JA Connect Learning Pathways: <https://futurebydesign.ja.org/career>. Based on a proven product development system from Intuit®, *JA Future by Design: Careers* allows students to approach their future as if it were a project or product they want to launch.
- JA Digital Career Book allows extensive exploration of career clusters and provides information about local employers and education: <https://career.ja.org/>. Registering and logging in offers localized information.

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** Don't Ask Me Again ×

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

🔍

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

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

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## 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, including internships and apprenticeships.

## Activity: Soft Skills

Students explore key soft skills that are important to employers in all careers.

## 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 Learning Pathways: <https://connect.ja.org/listpage/playlist/22045>.

## Activity: Education, Training, and Apprenticeships

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 and to be fulfilled in your life.
- All careers require training and education. Having a vision of your future career allows you to start planning as early as fifth grade to take relevant courses and programs.
- Informational interviews and job shadows are ways to learn from someone about their job. Internships, with or without pay, are a great way to learn while working in a career of interest. Apprenticeships combine paid work with training and mentorship.
- To learn more about career clusters or jobs, visit the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics: <https://www.bls.gov>.
- *JA Access Your Future* is an app that can help calculate the costs of postsecondary education. It's accessible via JA Connect Learning Pathways: <https://connect.ja.org/apps/>.
- Students can identify transferable skills to include in resumes, job applications, and interviews from the self-guided activity **Collecting Evidence of Transferable Skills**: <https://connect.ja.org/work-career-readiness/whats-work-like/choose-a-career-investigate-myself/collecting-evidence-of-transferable-skills2>

# Session Four: Local Business Means Opportunity

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## 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* career fair 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 career fair.

## Objectives

STUDENTS WILL:

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

## Activity: Research Your Local Economy

Students explore the *JA Inspire* career fair exhibitor list and the website of the local Chamber of Commerce to identify common career clusters and companies of interest.

## Talking Points

- The *JA Inspire* career fair 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 career fair 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** worksheet.

### Talking Points

- Regardless of your career aspirations, you can find interesting and relevant exhibitors at the *JA Inspire* career fair.
- Preparation can improve the time you spend at the *JA Inspire* career fair. Exploring the companies that will be there and which align most closely with your own interests will give you a more meaningful experience.
- Two 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-e-verywhere-2>

## Activity: Brag Sheet

Students create a brag sheet to help them collect their thoughts about their values, skills, and abilities.

### Talking Points

- Creating and getting comfortable with a brag sheet can help give you confidence when you meet with someone in a career that interests you.
- Brag sheets highlight accomplishments and can be a precursor to a resume or online profile.
- Students can learn how to write a resume from the self-guided activity **Crafting Your Resume:** <https://connect.ja.org/work-career-readiness/plan-your-path/resumes2/crafting-your-resume2>.
- A series of self-guided activities on conducting informational interviews would be helpful to those students interested in setting up an informational interview or job shadow experience. They can be found on JA Connect Learning Pathways: <https://connect.ja.org/listpage/playlist/22044>.



# Session Five: Learn From the Experts

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## 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* career fair 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* career fair 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 identify relevant *JA Inspire* career fair speakers and webinars to attend and develop questions to consider when watching them.

## Talking Points

- Regardless of your career aspirations, you can find interesting and relevant speakers and webinars at the career fair.
- Preparation can improve the time you spend at the *JA Inspire* career fair.

## 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* career fair 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 Six: Visit the JA Inspire Career Fair

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### Big Idea

Stay on track. Organize and document your experience.

### Overview

In this session, students attend the *JA Inspire* career fair.

### Objectives

STUDENTS WILL:

- Learn how to navigate the career fair.
- Visit exhibits at the *JA Inspire* career fair event.
- Attend speeches and webinars.
- Complete the What I Learned section of the chart from their **Learn from the Experts** worksheet.



# Session Seven: JA Inspire Personal Reflection

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## 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 Virtual* program.
- Identify next steps, including exploration of post-Secondary education and networking opportunities.

## Video: Reflection and Next Steps

Students will access the video in their digital student guidebook. You can preview the video at <https://youtu.be/0CP4zZLbiQg>.

## Activity: Reflection

Students reflect individually about the *JA Inspire Virtual* program.

## Talking Points

- Referring to the career inventory when you review your notes from the event helps keep you focused on careers that could be right for you.
- The *JA Inspire Virtual* program 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 students on their success. Encourage them to review their career inventory results as they consider academic courses for next year and beyond.
- Remind students to explore the career planning self-guided activities on JA Connect Learning Pathways: <https://connect.ja.org/work-career-readiness/>.
- The JA Area will provide you with a post-completion check to give feedback about your experience. Please take a moment to complete the post-check. Your comments will help improve the quality of Junior Achievement programs.

