

Worksite Tours and Job Shadowing

Work-Based Learning Benchmark:

Participate in work site tours, job shadowing, and informational interviews at community businesses. (Partial)

Note to those providing service:

These activities are developed in a way that allows the learner to gradually build upon their skills. Each student has different foundational skills so some students may need more support or instruction than others. With that being said, you can choose what activity you start with based on your learner's strengths and needs.



Extend Pathways

Students who are interested or enrolled in career and technical education (CTE) or post-secondary, regardless of disability (remember to presume competence!), may or may not need some of the information that seems introductory in nature. Take as much or little time as needed based on student knowledge. More specific activities related to CTE and post-secondary are identified as extended activities and pathways.

Preparation and Materials Needed:

- Prepare needed assistive technologies and/or accommodations (ex: communication supports (visual, objects, pictures, voice output devices, etc.), physical supports/space access needs, vision supports, hearing supports, sensory needs/supports).
- Some of these activities require using the internet to look up information about business and work industries or watch videos. Depending on your students' access to computers or skill level, you may need to print materials for students in advance.
- Student's completed [My Network](#) worksheet from Lesson 1: Expanding Your Opportunities Through Networking / Activity 2 and 3.



Print:

- [My Network](#)
- [Work-Based Learning Checklist for Instructors](#)
- [Worksite Tour and Job Shadowing Ideas](#)
- [All About the Business](#)
- [Pick Your Questions](#)
- [Create Your Own Questions](#)

Activities to Meet Benchmarks:

Activity 1: What is a Worksite Tour? What is a Job Shadow?

This activity aims to define the purpose and value of a worksite tour and job shadow experiences.

Note to Instructors: *Using connections from Lesson 1: Expanding Your Opportunities Through Networking the Activity 2 and 3 networking activity, you should be able to schedule a worksite tour and/or job shadow within the students' interests for the purpose of this lesson. Here is a [Work-Based Learning Checklist for Instructors](#) with additional resources if needed. Ideally, the worksite tour and/or job shadow should be in the process of being scheduled before starting Activity 2 of this lesson. Knowing who they will be shadowing or where they are touring can help students tailor their questions more effectively.*



Discuss: Worksite tours are scheduled visits to workplaces. These tours give you a firsthand look at how different jobs and industries work. These tours can include guided walkthroughs, demonstrations of the actual work, and chances to talk with employees to ask questions. This gives you a real-world look at what it's like to work in a certain career or at a certain business.

A job shadow is like a worksite tour, but instead of observing a worksite, you are observing someone who works in a specific job or career. As the name implies, you are like that person's shadow by watching what they do to better understand their responsibilities, tasks, and workplace.



Watch: [Worksite Tours: Preparing For Your Visit](#) (Video – 3min) and [How to Job Shadow](#) (Video – 4min)

A worksite tour or job shadow are typically with an employer or in a career you are interested in learning more about. This is another way to figure out if your career interest is something you may want or may not want to pursue. Either way, this information is helpful to you as you make career decisions.

Try these different prompting questions to help start the conversation:

- What do you think you might learn on a worksite tour or a job shadow?
- How could a worksite tour change your perspective on a job?
- What questions would you ask during a tour?



Discuss: Have you ever visited a workplace? This could be where a parent works, a field trip, or even somewhere in the community (e.g. a store, restaurant, community pool).
[Note to Instructors: Facilitate a brief discussion to allow students to share their experiences.]

- What jobs did you notice?
- Were people working while sitting, standing, or moving around?
- Were people interacting or working alone?

How do you begin to decide where to reach out for a worksite tour or job shadow? It helps when you start thinking about your interests and skills. Combining your interests and skills helps guide you to jobs, careers or work environments that may be interesting to you. Let's think back to when you were networking. Who on your [My Network](#) tool was someone you were interested in knowing more about their job or where they work?



Resource: Use the [Worksite Tour and Job Shadowing Ideas](#) to help you identify work site tours or job shadow ideas.



Click and Explore: If students need help coming up with ideas, help them navigate to [Career OneStop](#). Here you can look up a job or interest along with your city. For example, if you search for 'animal caretaker' in your city, a page of information will come up, including a brief video to watch about that career.

Activity 2: Learning About the Business and Career

This activity aims to learn about the business or career and identify questions to ask.

Note to Instructors: *Some of these activities including using the internet to look up information about business and work industries. Depending on the student's access to computers or skills, you may need to print materials for them prior to the lesson].*



Discuss: Before you do your worksite tour and/or job shadowing, you have to prepare. To make the most of this experience, it helps to know more about the business you'll be visiting. It is important to remember that this is an opportunity to meet an employer. Let's start by talking about the business you'll visit.

- What do you already know about this business, or the kinds of jobs people do there?
- What do you think it would be like to work there?
- What do you want to know more about?



Resource: Now, let's double-check what the student knows about the business. Here are two worksheets for students to pick from to research information about the business. The first one is more general information, and the second option is for more specific information.

- **Option 1:** Use [All About the Business](#) to guide some of your business research. This worksheet includes general questions about the business type, history, jobs and skills, customers and work culture. Students can write, type, or draw their answer to help them prepare for their visit.
- **Option 2:** Use this [Research Activity tool from NAF](#). This tool has more in-depth questions to help students explore more about the business selected.

Activity 3: What Do I Want to Know?

This activity aims to prepare questions for a worksite tour and/or job shadow.



Discuss: Now that you know more about the business, let's think about what questions you might have for them. The time you spend with an employer or employee is important. Before your visit, take some time to think about what you want to learn. Asking good questions is a great way to understand a career, workplace, and what the job is like day to day. It shows you're interested and serious about your future. It can also help you decide if this type of work is right for you.



Resource: Asking questions not only helps you but it also shows that you are interested and care. What questions do you want to ask? Do you want to know more about the work environment, the work culture, or even how to best prepare for that career. [Pick Your Questions](#) or [Create Your Own Questions](#) worksheets are a way to take notes on what questions you are interested in asking.



Click and Explore: If students need more ideas, below is a list of resources to use when preparing for a worksite tour or job shadow experience.

- [Worksite Tour and Field Trip Student Questions | Transition TN](#)
 - This one-page resource includes example questions for students to pick based on what they are interested in knowing. It also shares ideas on how to implement.
- [WBL Research Prep-Activity | Academy Support Hub - NAF](#)
 - This is a two-page document to document the purpose of the meeting, host and organization information, and questions to prepare for discussion and engagement.



Interactive Opportunity: See if you can bring in the principal or other administrative staff member for students to practice asking their questions. While you can role play within the classroom, it may help to have a less familiar adult who students identify as a leader to practice. Start by modeling for students how you would ask a question and allowing for an answer to show students what is expected. It is important to note that some students may feel nervous or anxious about speaking up and asking questions. Validate these concerns, practice how to ask questions, and support the student to step out of their comfort zone.

Activity 4: Preparing for a Worksite Tour and Job Shadow

This activity aims to prepare students for what to expect of a worksite tour and job shadow and how to ask questions.

Note to Instructors: Consider what supports a student may need to prepare an outfit for experience. Reach out to caregiver(s) or guardian(s), school personnel, and others as needed.



Discuss: Getting ready for a worksite tour or job shadow means more than just showing up—it's about being prepared to learn and make a good impression. It's important to know how to dress right, have the right attitude, and make a checklist to stay on track.

Make sure yourself, your clothes, and your hair clean and neat. You will want to make sure your hair is out of your face. How do you think you should dress for your experience? It's also important to dress right!



Watch: This video talks about how to dress for an interview. While you are not going to an interview, the tips in this video are still helpful for the interactions you'll have with employers and employees. [Dress for Success](#) (Video – 3:30 min).

[Note to Instructors: Pause video during the outfit comparisons, yes (green checkmark) and no (red x), to prompt students to discuss why the Yes outfit was checked.]

- What do you need to wear based on the business or employee you are scheduled with?
- Do you have this outfit at home? (Students may need support problem solving how to pull the outfit together for the experience).



Interactive Opportunity:

- Have students pick a retail store they are familiar with and has a website. Have students search for clothes they would wear. Include things like shoes, belt, pants, shirt, etc. Students can create a slide deck or share the images.
- If technology is not available, share magazines and students can cut images out of what they would like to wear or what not to wear.



Discuss: Another expectation from the employers or employees is that you are actively listening. Being present means giving your full attention to the experience. This means putting away distractions like your phone, focusing on what is happening around you, and showing interest in what others are saying or doing. Something that can help us focus are the questions we came up with but also knowing what to look for, especially on a worksite tour.



Resource: A way to help with being present is to think about or take notes on what you may notice at the worksite or with the employee. What jobs do I see? Do people work individually, together, both?



Review: Before your worksite visit, it's important to be prepared so you can make the most of the experience. Make sure to dress appropriately, be respectful, and you can bring the questions and notes your prepared. Remember, this is your chance to learn and show you're interested in exploring your future.

Activity 5: Discovering Careers in Action

This activity aims to support students in their worksite tour and/or job shadow experience.

Note to Instructors: *Students should have their introduction and questions ready from their [Pick Your Questions](#) or [Create Your Own Questions](#). Here is a checklist and resources as a reminder [Work-Based Learning Checklist for Instructors](#).*

Students can use this [Career Learning Note Catcher](#) to take notes during the experience. You may also want to have clipboards and pens/pencils for the students. Students can also use their phone or device as a notetaker. Prepare the employer/employee for this notetaking method and remind students the purpose of their devices. Any students needing assistive technology, accommodations, or supports should bring these items with them or have them available prior to the experience.



Discuss: Today is the day! You've worked hard to prepare for your experience by learning about the employer, planning your questions, and practicing. Remember, this is an opportunity for you to learn first-hand about the career you're interested in to help you decide if you want to continue your interest.

It is important to be polite and listen. Since many places have safety rules, follow any directions given by me or the employees. There will be time to ask your questions.

[Note to Instructors: Ensure any accommodations are in place prior to the visit whether on-site or virtual. If virtual, ensure all the students can see the guest and that the guest can see all of the students. This may vary depending on if the guest speaker is the same or different for all the students. Have the students do their introductions.]

Students can use their materials to begin asking questions of the guest speaker. Support and prompt students as needed to ask their questions and allow them to take notes.

As the conversation ends, thank the guest for their time or any additional advice for the students. After the guest leaves students can share their thoughts.]



Wrap-Up

Worksite tours and job shadowing give you a chance to see what different jobs are really like. By watching professionals and asking questions, you learn about the tasks, work environment, and skills needed for the job. These experiences help you make better choices about your future career and improve your ability to network and feel confident. Remember these lessons as you explore more career options and use what you've learned to move forward in your career planning.