



MyToolkit

Informational Interview

What's Inside!

- What is Informational Interview?
- Talking about Disability
- Requesting an Informational Interview
- Interview Questions
- What to Wear
- Social Media: Clean It Up!
- Saying "Thank you"
- Notes





Informational Interview



**Go talk to people! Ask questions.
Ask to see them while they're working.
This is called Informational interviewing!**

One of the best ways to find out about the world of work is to talk to people about their jobs. A person can give you great information about what it's really like to work and what a particular job is really all about.

Here are Some Tips on Informational Interviewing:

Create My List

Identify people to interview.

- Who Do I Know?
- Who have jobs that I am interested in know more about.



Tip: Think about family, teachers, counselors, friends, social media friends, church members, neighbors, or anyone else.

Get ready to talk to people

- Develop a brief introduction of yourself and what you hope learn.
- Make a list of questions you'd like to have answered.



Tip: Look at "What Questions Should I Ask?" in this toolkit



Contact people or organizations

- Call or email ahead to set up an appointment.
- Say who you are and why you want to meet with them.
- Say how much time you'd like. (30-60 minutes)
- Tell them that you are looking for information and not expecting a job.



Tip: Check out the sample script in this toolkit for ideas.

Conduct the informational interview

- Google map directions to the location. Have a plan for how to get there.
- Arrive on time or a few minutes early.
- Dress neatly.
- Turn your phone off so you can give the person your full attention.
- Give a brief introduction of yourself. Ask a few questions about them.
- Take notes about the information you receive.
- Respect the person's time. Keep the interview to the time agreed upon.



Tips: Look at the information on what to wear in this toolkit.
Use the note page in this toolkit for additional notes.

Follow up. Write this Down!

- What did you learn? What more would you like to know about the job?
- Does this job still fit with your skills, lifestyle, interests, and future plans?
- Send a thank you within 1-2 days.



Tip: See the sample thank you note in this toolkit

Thinking of Telling Others about Your Disability ?



Telling someone you have a disability is a very personal choice – one only you can make.

Talk to someone you trust

A teacher, rehabilitation counselor, or friend may be able to help you sort through the pros and cons of talking about your disability. They could also help you explore different ways employers can make changes to a job or workplace to accommodate your disability.

Check this out

Here's a good resource: The 411 on Disability Disclosure: A Workbook for Youth with Disabilities

<http://www.ncwd-youth.info/411-on-disability-disclosure>



Requesting an Informational Interview

Email



Here's What You can Write in an Email:

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. *(Name)*,

My friend, *(Name)*, suggested that I contact you. I would like to meet with you to ask you some questions about your job. I am exploring jobs that I'm interested in and would like to talk to you about your work. Do you have half an hour to meet with me to answer some questions? Please let me know a date and time that would work for you to meet.

Also, the work address I have for you is *(address)*. Is that correct? **-OR-**
Can you please give me your work address?

Thank you very much,
(Your name)

Tips:

- When writing to a work contact, use more formal language than when you're texting on your phone or writing a note to a friend.
- Spell out all words (for example, write "you're" instead of "ur," and "I don't know," instead of IDK).
- Have an adult look at your note before you send it – a second set of eyes can be really helpful.



Requesting an Informational Interview

Phone Call



Here's What You Might Say on a Phone Call:

Hi Mr./Ms./Dr. *(Name)*, my name is *(fill in)*, and I'm a student.

How are you doing today?

I'm calling to see if you would be willing to help me with some research. I'm doing looking into careers in *(job or field)* and I was wondering if you would let me visit you at your office to ask you some career-related questions?

What day is best for you? *(write down the date)*

What time is good for you? *(write down the time)*

Ok so that's *(day of the week)*, *(date)* at *(time)*

May I have your address? **-OR-**

The address I have for you is *(address)*. Is that correct?

(Research the address and fill in beforehand)

Thank you Mr./Ms./Dr. *(Name)*. I'm excited to talk to you.

Note:

- If you're asked, "What kind of questions do you have?" look at the question sheet. Sample answer:
"I would like to ask you questions like: "How long have you been doing your job?" "How did you figure out what type of job you wanted?"
- If you're asked "How long will it take?" Answer: About 25 minutes.

Interview Questions

What Questions Should I Ask?

- Put together a list of questions before you go to the informational interview.
- Decide what you want to find out.
- Write your questions down.
- It's better to go into the interview with too many questions than not enough.



Here are Some Ideas for Questions:

Could you describe one of your typical workdays?

What skills are required in your position?

What part of your job do you find most challenging?

What do you like best about what you do?

How many hours do you work in a typical week?

Is this field growing so that there will be room for people like me?

How did you get your job?

What kind of education or training is required to go into this field?

What personal qualities are necessary to be successful at this job?

Are there any volunteer opportunities within this organization?

What would be a reasonable salary range to expect if I entered this field?

What kinds of problems do you deal with?

How did you become interested in this career?

What kinds of decisions do you make?

What advice would you give someone who is considering this type of job?

Dress for Success !

- If you are planning an informational interview, or any kind of meeting with someone to ask about their job or future work opportunities, it's important to dress for success!
- What you wear depends on what type of work environment you're going to. Think about what you'll be doing. Will you be outside, in an office, in a public place such as a restaurant?

These are things to think about, but there are a few general rules you should always follow.

Make sure your clothes are clean and free of rips and stains.

Wear clothing and shoes that are right for the environment.

Don't choose a shirt that has any offensive sayings or graphics on it.

Take the time to clean up your shoes a little if needed and make sure they're easy to walk in.

Shorts, tank tops, crop tops, low cut shirts, or skirts that are too short are never a good choice. Jeans may be ok in some situations.



If you aren't sure, ask someone who can help you make good choices.

Social Media: Clean It Up

You're thinking about venturing into work and talking to people about yourself and work !

- When you talk with someone about work, they may want to know more about you.
- They'll likely google your name and see your social media accounts.

Google Yourself

Before contacting people about work, google yourself.

- What information comes up?
- If there are pictures of you online, are you dressed appropriately?
- Are you doing things an employer would think were awesome?
- Is your language appropriate?



Employers Are Watching

CareerBuilder (2017) reports that 70% of employers look at applicants' social media profiles before making a hiring decision and 54% have decided not to hire applicants based on what they saw in their social media profiles.

If you see things on social media a professional contact might wonder about – CLEAN IT UP!

Saying “Thank You”

Send a Thank You Note !

- The note can be very short
- You can mail the thank you or email it
- Send the thank you within a day or two after your informational interview



Here's an Example of a Thank You Note:

(Date)

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. *(Name)*,

Thank you for your time today. You gave me a lot of really helpful information. I enjoyed learning more about your experience with *(job or field)*.

One of the things I found most interesting was *(fill in)*. You gave me some great tips about working and I think I can put them to use in the future.

Thank you again for talking with me.

Sincerely,

(Your name)

Tips:

- When writing to a work contact, use more formal language than when you're texting on your phone or writing a note to a friend.
- Spell out all words (for example, write “you’re” instead of “ur,” and “I don’t know,” instead of IDK).
- Have an adult look at your note before you send it – a second set of eyes can be really helpful.

