

ASK A CAREER COACH

FOR THE TEACHER:

Introduction

In addition to familiarizing students with the features and information available in **INSPIRE MADISON REGION** the purpose of this activity is to:

- help students learn more about a career that interests them and build on that knowledge by connecting with a practitioner in the field
- allow students the opportunity to practice critical communication and networking skills
- highlight the message boards as a place to find mentors in the community

Setting The Stage

Ask students a series of *Whom do you turn to for advice...* questions. (e.g. *Whom do you turn to for advice on dating? Whom do you turn to for advice on your math homework?*) Finish with *Whom do you turn to for career planning advice?* Answers will vary—and you can discuss the merits of seeking advice from the sources students suggest—but narrow in on the advantages of consulting an expert in the field that interests them as a source of insight into the career. Explain that in this activity, students will have the opportunity to get advice about an occupation that interests them from a career coach who performs that job.

Note: The Summary – Your Opinion section of the worksheet cannot be completed until after students have received a response to the question they have posted on the Career Coach Message Board. Students will have to return to this worksheet at a later date; however, it's an important step as it gives them a chance to reflect on the coach's answer to their question and re-evaluate their interest in the career.

Extension Activity

In pairs, students can compose and deliver a mock interview between a student reporter and a professional in a career that interests them. They can develop questions as they did in the worksheet, and use the message boards, Career Cruising occupation profiles, and the sites in the Other Resources section to research answers. While the content of their interview, use of resources, and quality of delivery are important, students should also be creative!

Starting The Program

Go to **www.careercruising.com**. Enter your Plan username and password in the spaces provided, and click on Log In. If you do not have a personal Plan account – Login with your school/site's username and password **and** create a personal Plan.

WORKSHEET: ASK A CAREER COACH

Part A: What do I want to know about an occupation?

Click on the **INSPIRE MADISON REGION** tab in the menu bar at the top of the page. Click on the **CAREER COACH MESSAGE BOARDS** link (found in the light blue area just below the menu bar) and then filter by Cluster by clicking the blue **CHOOSE CLUSTER** button. Choose a career cluster. (It can be one you've researched before, or one that interests but you don't know much about.)

Read through the list of careers in that cluster. Click on one that you'd like to learn more about.

Occupation: _____

1. Click on the VIEW CAREER PROFILE button and the go to the JOB DESCRIPTION section. Read this section of the profile and answer the following questions:

What do people in this occupation do?

What interests you most about the tasks people in this occupation do? (*e.g. working with state-of-the-art technical equipment, helping people, building things, etc.*)

Write down three questions that you would like to ask someone in this career about the tasks he or she performs. (*e.g. What skills do you need to perform these tasks?*)

2. Read the WORKING CONDITIONS section. Answer the following questions:

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What are the working conditions like for people in this career? (e.g. frequent travel, working in an office, facing dangerous situations)

What working conditions would you enjoy if you were in this career? Which wouldn't you like?

Write down two questions you would like to ask someone in this career about his or her working conditions. (e.g. How do you handle being away from home so much?)

3. Read the EDUCATION section. Answer the following questions:

What are the education or training requirements for this career? (e.g. associate degree, formal apprenticeship, on-the job training)

Would you be willing to complete the education and/or training needed to enter this career? Why or why not?

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Write down two questions you would like to ask someone in this career about the education or training requirements. (e.g. *What do you need to include in your application to law school? How did you find your apprenticeship?*)

4. Write down any other questions you would like to ask someone working in this occupation.

Part B: Post a question to the Career Coach Message Board

Click on the **ASK A CAREER COACH** button in the menu on the left side of the page. Read through some of the questions that have been posted to the board. Review the questions that you developed in Part A of this activity and choose one you'd like to ask the career coach. (If your questions already appear, try to think of a new question or add to the related thread with a follow-up question.)

My Question: _____

Click on the blue **ASK A QUESTION** selection in the left navigation area and follow the instructions. (If you have not logged into your personal Plan, please login to your Plan.)

Note: Your question will not show up on the board right away. Once a career coach has responded to your message, both your question and the reply will appear.

Summary – Your Views (To be completed after your question has been answered by a career coach.)

Summarize (put briefly into your own words) the career coach's response to your question:

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How did the career coach's response to your question influence your opinion of the career? (e.g. *The training requirements don't sound as difficult as I thought. People in this career WLA alone more often than I thought.*)

Now that you've learned a little more about this occupation from someone who works in the field, are you interested in pursuing it? Why or why not?

Why do you think it's a good idea to talk to somebody in an occupation you're considering before deciding whether or not it's right for you?

Post more questions! If you want to learn more about his career, post the other questions that you developed for this activity to the Career Coach Message Board. You can also go back and search for a different career that interests you, and develop and post questions to that message board.