

From Job Shadow to Performance Task

Interview Tips & Questions

Outcome: Complete a job shadow/interview with a professional in your pathway industry sector to design curriculum that replicates the “real-world” work of that professional.

Use the following questions as a guide to help translate your job shadow experience with an industry partner into an authentic performance task for students in your pathway. Also, consider the following suggestions during your job shadow:

- **Ask for documents.** The more authentic collateral your industry partner is willing to share, the less you will have to create or simulate. “Actual” documents from the workplace can serve as templates for your own curricular design.
- **Respect client/company privacy.** Given the nature of many industry sectors, your industry partner may be apprehensive about sharing sensitive documents or information.
- **Build relationships.** See if your industry partner would be willing to collaborate or partner with you/students moving forward. Would they be interested in reviewing curriculum you’ve designed a result of the job shadow; providing feedback to students regarding work products; serve as a guest speaker; act as a mentor for student internship, or further study?
- **Dig Deep.** Don’t worry about spending the majority of your time together digging deeply into a specific area of the industry partner’s practice. If your conversation comes upon something that you feel could lend itself to an engaging, rigorous, authentic performance task, find out as much as you can to assist in your curricular design.

General Questions:

- Who are your clients or customers?
- What are your primary responsibilities? Have these responsibilities shifted over time?
- What is the most challenging aspect of your job? What specifically makes it challenging for you?
- What is most engaging or rewarding about your job? Why?
- What do you wish you had learned in high school that may have helped you better prepare for the work that you do in this industry?
- What jobs within your industry do you expect to have the greatest demand within the next five years? How do you locate future employees?
- What advice might you give a person applying for employment at this workplace? Given two equally qualified applicants, how would your workplace decide which to hire?

Questions related to Literacy and Writing:

- What do you read in this industry? Is there something you read every day for your job? Are there trade publications/blogs you read to stay informed about your industry? Could you show us some examples, point us toward some resources?
- What do you (and/or team members) have to write for your job? Could you show us some examples of the types of (formal and informal) writing you might do?

Questions related to Critical Thinking and Problem Solving:

- In what ways do you have to analyze, interpret, cite research/information?
- What types of problems do you solve (for a client, internally as a team)?
- Describe a typical project you might work on. What are the steps involved?
- What are some of the ways you utilize math skills/understanding in your work – from specific math computation and content, to more general logical reasoning and analysis?
- Can you think of anything from your high school math/science classes that would be relevant to the work you're doing now?
- Can you describe the process you would go through to make a difficult decision? Do you specify goals and constraints; generate alternative solutions; consider and evaluate risks; negotiate conflict or divergent interests?

Questions related to Creativity and Innovation:

- In what ways do you have to innovate to find solutions to a problem?
- How do you/colleagues keep up-to-date with new ideas and approaches in your industry?
- How often do you engage in a process of inquiry at this workplace? Is that a process that would be replicable in a high school classroom?
- [Engineering] Is there a process or a protocol you follow when prototyping/innovating solutions to a particular design challenge, etc.? Could you show use the materials/documents you would actually use for this process?

Questions related to Technology & Media:

- What types of technology are most relevant/important to your industry?
- Which technological skills require specialized training; which could a high-school student learn to implement without intensive training?
- How has technology changed your workplace in the past few years? What technological shifts do you anticipate in this industry in the future?
- What computer programs, or technical applications, are essential to success in your industry? What technological skills are expected of any prospective employee?

Questions related to Collaboration & Self-Management:

- Do you typically work as an individual, or with a team? What types of ways do you interact and/or collaborate with colleagues? How often (under what circumstances) does this happen?
- What is an example of a something you would revise multiple times before feeling satisfied with your work/final product?
- What does the iterative process look like in your workplace? How do you get necessary feedback to revise your work?
- Do you have articulated protocols or processes for effective teamwork? How are you/your colleagues held accountable for responsibilities?
- Are there ethical considerations important to your industry? Can you describe a situation where these considerations would play out?
- How do you manage important resources (time; financial; material; human) efficiently and equitably in your workplace?
- Is there a process/protocol used by your workplace for collective decision-making, or consensus building?