LEARNING EXPERIENCE BRIEF

JA Inspire® Entry

▶ Work and Career Readiness

JA Inspire is much more than a career fair. It brings together the business community and local schools and is designed to help launch middle school students into their future—high school, postsecondary education, and careers beyond. The curriculum can be completed by students independently at home, or in a classroom with or without educator involvement. The *JA Inspire* event, which follows the curriculum, can be in-person, virtual, or both.

The learning experience consists of three segments: (1) pre-event career-oriented sessions; (2) the *JA Inspire* event; and (3) a post-event reflection. The *JA Inspire* event is aligned with local industry and career opportunities, as well as JA Area and local school district preferences.

JA Inspire in-person events are multi-hour experiences where students participate in hands-on activities, often using equipment or tools used on a job. VFairs, the online interactive platform used to host *JA Inspire* virtual events, allows students to attend webinars and presentations, explore company exhibits, and interact with career speakers. Both event types provide students a powerful way to learn about real-world career opportunities and their local economy.

This learning experience is part of the JA Work and Career Readiness Pathway and is designed for Grades 6–8.

LEARNING EXPERIENCE HIGHLIGHTS

- Multiple curriculum implementation options: fully educator-led, fully self-guided, or hybrid with classroom introductions and talking points for all self-guided sessions.
- Allows students to explore their own values, skills, and interests, plus career clusters and the specific jobs that align with them.
- Requires a digital device for each participating student.
- Event (virtual, in-person, or both) provides a powerful way to learn about real-world careers.
- Provides many extension activities via JA Connect® (connect.ja.org/work-career-readiness)

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LEARNING EXPERIENCE OBJECTIVES

After participating in the learning experience, students will be able to:

- Gain insight into career clusters that interest them.
- Make connections with professionals who have jobs in careers that interest them.
- See the connection between high school programming choices and careers.
- Collect information about the education required to be successful in a job.
- Practice soft skills.

VFAIRS PLATFORM DETAILS (VIRTUAL EVENT ONLY)

- Is accessible from any device.
- No downloads are required.
- Visually rich virtual environment mimics the dynamics of a physical live event, including a virtual lobby, information desk, auditorium for presentations, and exhibit halls with sponsoring company booths.
- Students can revisit the virtual *JA Inspire* event multiple times.
- Materials can be saved to a virtual backpack and emailed to students or to parents/caregivers post event.

JA INSPIRE CURRICULUM

The *JA Inspire* curriculum's implementation is flexible, based on educator and JA Area preferences. Educators can introduce and follow up activities using the optional wraparound session guides, or students can complete sessions independently at home or in the classroom. Downloadable, fillable PDF student activity pages, videos, and links to websites are accessed through the digital student guidebook. Self-guided extended learning resources are identified.

1. **Session One: Career Interests and Your Path**

   Students understand the importance of career planning and complete a Career Interest Inventory to assess their own values, skills, and interests in the context of career paths.

2. **Session Two: Career Planning and Your Path**

   Using JA Here to Career® at https://career.ja.org, students learn to recognize career clusters and focus on those tied to the results of their Career Interest Inventory. They explore the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for their careers of interest, as well as the outlook for openings in those fields.

3 Session Three: Preparing to Meet Your Future

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.

4 Session Four: Local Business Means Opportunity

Students learn about their local economy. They review the list of *JA Inspire* exhibitors and the website of their local Chamber of Commerce and look for common themes, such as career clusters. They identify companies they would like to visit during the *JA Inspire* event.

5 Session Five (Virtual Event): Learn from the Experts

This session is used if students are attending a virtual JA Inspire *event.*

Students review the speakers and webinars at the *JA Inspire* virtual event, create a list of at least three to view, and define what they would like to learn from them.

Session Five (In-Person Event): Prepare for the *JA Inspire* Event

This session is used if students are attending an in-person JA Inspire *event.*

Students prepare for the in-person *JA Inspire* event by reviewing logistics of the event day and getting ready to make a good first impression when interacting with company representatives.

6 Session Six: Visit the *JA Inspire* Event

Students attend the *JA Inspire* event. This may be a virtual event on the vFairs platform, an in-person event, or both.

7 Session Seven: *JA Inspire* Personal Reflection

Students reflect on what they have learned and identify next steps to further define their academic choices and career path.

SUPPLEMENTAL ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) LITERACY TOPICS

A suite of AI literacy topics is offered to equip students with cutting-edge knowledge of emerging technologies and responsible use practices, complementing their essential work skills to better prepare them for the workplace.

- AI From the Inside Out: 4 topics
- AI: Fact, Fairness, and Fiction: 3 topics
- AI Prompt Power: 4 topics
- A+ AI to $ Success: 3 topics