

# Job Shadow Handbook



## Introduction to Job Shadowing

By definition, a job shadow is: An educational program where students can learn about a particular occupation or profession to see if it might be suitable for them. In job shadowing, a business typically partners with an educational establishment to provide an experience for a student of what it is like to perform a certain type of work by having them accompany an experienced worker as they perform the targeted job.

## Benefits of a Job Shadow

There are many benefits of a job shadow. Job shadows provide students the opportunity to network with professionals in their community and learn the skills needed for that particular career.

- Explore a career in depth.
- Receive career pathway assistance from professionals in a desired career field.
- Observe daily routines of professionals.
- Gain insight into the workforce.
- Increase knowledge about available careers.
- Understand the connection between work and school and what is needed to achieve the career goals in the particular profession.
- Learn about future job outlooks in specific career fields.
- Help decide if the career path is a good fit.

## Questions to ask when job shadowing:

- Could you describe your career path that led you to this job?
- On average, how many hours do you work a week?
- What is a typical day like for you?
- What is the most rewarding or enjoyable part of your job?
- What is an area of challenge in this job and/or career field?
- How did you choose this occupation?
- When your company is hiring a new employee what qualifications or skills are they looking for?
- What are the advancement or growth opportunities?
- What can I be doing now in high school/college to prepare myself for this career?
- What is the job outlook for this career?
- Is there travel involved for this job?
- What advice would you give someone who is planning for this type of career?
- What is something most people do not know about this career?
- If you had to start all over again would you choose this career? Why or why not?

## Job Shadow Tips

### Before

- Dress appropriately ... as though you are going to a job interview. You don't need to wear a suit, but t-shirts and shorts are too casual. All clothing must fit appropriately; nothing too baggy or too tight, and nothing with profanity or symbols. Business casual is a good rule to follow!
- Wear closed-toe shoes that are in good repair; no flip flops or dirty tennis shoes.
- Use proper personal hygiene (deodorant, mouthwash, etc.) and don't go overboard on the cologne or perfume.
- Cover any tattoos and remove any piercings (other than ear); spacers must be clear or flesh-colored.
- Turn off your cell phone and resist the urge to text, tweet, or snapchat! Just leave your cell phone in your car to avoid the temptation of using it!
- Confirm the time and location of the job-shadowing experience. Call the day before; the contact information is on your copy of the placement sheet. Allow extra time to ensure you are not late.
- Research your job-shadow employer/organization to better prepare you for the day. Go to the organization's website and learn more!

### During

- Bring your list of questions!
- Be prepared to answer questions about your interests and goals.
- Make good first impressions. As you introduce yourself — or get introduced — shake hands with everyone you meet, smile, and make good eye contact.
- Act professionally throughout the job-shadowing experience, showing your enthusiasm and appreciation. If you don't like the shadowing experience, avoid making it obvious and do your best to make it through smiling.
- Take a notepad or laptop to record observations and insights.
- Prepare for changes — things could happen that might end the shadowing sooner than expected. If something like this happens, react positively, and ask about possibly rescheduling for a better time.
- Address people as Mr. or Ms. or Dr. unless they tell you other wise.
- Listen and learn as much as possible.
- Gather business cards from the people you meet so you can add them to your network — and to thank them for taking time from their work to meet with you.
- Thank each person you spend time with during the job shadow.

### After

- Follow up with a thank-you note after you've completed the job shadow experience.

## Tips on Writing a Thank You

- Be neat and write legibly
- Personalize your thank you by including a specific “something” you learned or enjoyed from your job shadow experience
- Proofread what you write
- Use a pen
- Write out the letter on paper before writing it on the thank you card
- Use proper grammar and punctuation

## Sample Thank you

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to complete a job shadow at (name of business)\_\_\_ on (date of job shadow).

The job shadow experience provided me with a first-hand look at (list the field you shadowed) and the skills needed to be successful. (List some skills you learned). I feel fortunate to have had this experience.

There were many great opportunities during this experience. I particularly enjoyed (mention something you saw or were able to do).

Thank you again for allowing me to job shadow you.

Sincerely,

Your Name

(After employer fills out below form return to school counselor)

## Iowa Valley Intermediary Program

“Connecting Students to Careers”

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Age:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Employer:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Students time in:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Students time out:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Employers Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name or title of specific job shadowed:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Contact Information

If you have any questions about this information or questions regarding a job shadow contact:

**Hardin County Coordinator**  
1100 College Ave., Iowa Falls, IA 50126  
641-648-8527

**Marshall, Poweshiek, Tama County Coordinator**  
3702 S. Center St., Marshalltown, IA 50158  
641-844-5627