

Reflection & Thank-You Note

The **BIG** Idea

- What did I learn during my job shadow experience, and how will this help me plan for my future career?

AGENDA

- Approx. 45 minutes
- I. Warm Up: Do Now (5 minutes)
 - II. Job Shadow Reaction Discussion (10 minutes)
 - III. Workplace Skills Evaluation (10 minutes)
 - IV. Reflection (10 minutes)
 - V. Wrap Up: Thank-You Letter (10 minutes)

MATERIALS

- PORTFOLIO PAGES:**
 - Portfolio pages 8-9, Personal Skills Checklist
 - Portfolio page 10, Reflection
 - Portfolio page 25, Skills Checklist (job shadow skills only)
- STUDENT HANDBOOK PAGES:**
 - Student Handbook page 119, Job Shadow Reaction
 - Student Handbook page 120, Thank-You Letter Model
 - Student Handbook page 121, Thank-You Letter Template
- Overhead projector or laptop and LCD projector
- Stationery or business-appropriate note cards, with matching envelopes
- Stamps

OBJECTIVES

During this lesson, the student(s) will:

- Reflect on their job shadow experience, evaluating their interest in the career they observed.
- Consider their career readiness, and identify skills they'd like to acquire.
- Write a thank-you note to their job shadow host.

OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students reflect on their job shadow experiences and evaluate their career readiness. They begin by discussing their initial reactions to the workplace. Next, they identify skills that would be useful in the careers they observed, and choose skills they'd like to acquire. Then, they reflect on whether this is a career they'd be interested in pursuing. Finally, using a model and template, students write the requisite thank-you notes to their job shadow hosts.

NOTE: This lesson should be taught immediately following your students' job shadow. If necessary, postpone this lesson until all students have visited a workplace.

PREPARATION

- The following handouts need to be made into overhead transparencies or copied onto chart paper:
 - **Portfolio pages 8-9, Personal Skills Checklist**
 - **Student Handbook page 120, Thank-You Letter Model**
 - **Student Handbook page 121, Thank-You Letter Template**
- List the day's **BIG IDEA** and activities on the board.
- For **Activity II, Job Shadow Reaction Discussion**, determine pairs for the pair/share activity.
- For **Activity III, Workplace Skills Evaluation**, draw a T-chart on the board or chart paper. Label the left side, "Skills We Need to Acquire," and the right side, "How We Will Acquire These Skills."

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Reflection is always the final product of project-based learning. According to the Junior Achievement/Job Shadow Coalition, a job shadow is designed "to give kids the unique opportunity of an up-close look at the world of work and provide the answer to the commonly asked question, "Why do I have to learn this?" This lesson gives students the chance to explore their answers. The lesson also provides a chance to respond to the potentially unfamiliar culture of the workplace, and speculate on whether the observed career is a good fit.

IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS

You may vary the time allowed for each activity in the lesson, depending on the needs of your students. If you're short on time, thank-you notes may be assigned as homework. These must be returned to you before mailing, and checked off **Student Handbook page 25, Job Shadow Checklist** (Job Shadow 1, Intro to Job Shadow) as a requirement of this unit.

During the **Warm Up**, you may skip the pair/share if your students are eager to share their ideas with the group.

In **Activity IV, Wrap Up: Thank-You Letter**, you may prefer to have your students write a less formal note, omitting the addresses from the beginning of the letter.

ACTIVITY STEPS

I. WARM UP (5 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** By now, most of you have had a chance to spend a half day or more in the workplace, observing someone in a career you may be considering yourself. Today, we're going to talk about what you saw, how you felt, and what it means in terms of next career steps.

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: Turn to **Student Handbook page 119, Job Shadow Reaction**, and take a few minutes to describe your workplace visit – the good, the bad, and the in-between. When you're finished, we'll talk about your observations to see which experiences were unique and which were common to many people in the group.

2. Allow students a few minutes to complete the activity. When time is up, give students two minutes to share their responses with a partner.

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: Read the first prompt aloud, and take turns sharing your answers. Move on to the second prompt, and continue to alternate responses. Listen carefully for similarities and differences in your workplace visits.

II. Job Shadow Reaction Discussion (10 minutes)

1. Follow up with a whole-class discussion about students' job shadow impressions. Encourage the conversation by asking some or all of the following questions and having several students respond to each:
 - How did it feel to be in a workplace for the day?
 - What did you enjoy the most? Why?
 - What was the least enjoyable part of the day? Why?
 - Was anything about the experience stressful? Explain.
 - What parts of the job could you picture yourself doing?
 - What additional information might you need to determine if the career is right for you?
2. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** One thing worth noting is that people often feel exhausted after their first day in a new workplace. You may not know anyone there, and you may be wondering how to fit in or make a good first impression. Or you may love the atmosphere and think, "This is the place for me!" Or you may have feelings that are somewhere in between.

III. Workplace Skills Evaluation (10 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** You've done a great job describing your emotional reaction to the job shadow day. Let's talk about the skills you observed while you were in the workplace. What skills did you see in action that you already possess? [Students respond.] What skills did you see that made you think, "I have no clue?" [Students respond.]
2. [Have students turn to **Portfolio pages 8-9, Personal Skills Checklist** and display a copy on the overhead or LCD projector.]

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: Let's take a look at a checklist of basic skills most employers say they're looking for. This checklist may be familiar – you used it to identify your job skills in Grade 10.

Circle any skill you saw demonstrated during your job shadow. Then take a look at the columns to the right and check your ability in each. Finally, at the bottom of the page, list three skills that you'd like to acquire or improve, and one strategy for working on each.

3. When students have completed their portfolio page, show them the T-chart you created. (See **PREPARATION.**) Invite volunteers to share with the class what skills they need to acquire and how they plan to acquire them. Jot the skills and ideas for improvement/acquisition on the chart. Encourage classmates to suggest additional strategies for improvement.
4. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Are you surprised by how many skills we listed on the chart? You shouldn't be! It is highly unusual to begin a job having mastered every skill you will ultimately need. Workers learn and improve their skills while on the job. The challenge of learning new skills and/or developing existing ones is part of what makes a job exciting. You are already developing skills that employers will value, and you will continue to work on these skills throughout high school and beyond.

IV. Reflection (10 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** There's one more thing I'd like you to consider before you move on to the final activity of the job shadow unit. Please turn to **Portfolio page 10, Reflection.** You'll notice that this page is in the Portfolio section, which means you'll save this as a record of your career ideas, so please answer thoughtfully. Unlike the rest of today's activities, your ideas on this reflection will only be shared with me. Please take the next 10 minutes to consider what you observed and how you gauged this workplace experience in terms of career potential for you.

2. Give students 10 minutes to complete their reflection, and then bring them back together as a group.

V. Wrap Up: Thank-You Letter (10 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Last, but not least, it's time to write a thank-you note to your job shadow host. This is part of the process, a rule of the game. It lets your host know you appreciated the time spent with you, and identifies you as someone who's professional and serious about your career exploration. And maintaining a connection through a thank-you note makes it easier to re-contact your host if you need more help at a later time.
2. Have students turn to **Student Handbook page 120, Thank-You Letter Model** and display it on the overhead or LCD projector. Invite a volunteer to read it aloud.
3. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Let's look at each part of the letter.
 - **Date:** Month, day, year.
 - **Inside Address:** Host's name, including personal title (e.g., Mr., Ms., Mrs., Dr.), host's professional title (e.g., editor-in-chief), company name, street address, city, state, and zip code.
 - **Salutation:** Same name as the inside address, including the personal title.
 - **Body:**
 - Paragraph 1: Thank the host for his or her time and effort.
 - Paragraph 2: Explain why this experience was valuable to you. Tell what you learned and/or enjoyed during the job shadow.
 - Paragraph 3: Include additional comments and thank the host again for the opportunity to shadow him or her.
 - **Closing:** End with an appropriate closing such as, "Sincerely" or "Thank you," (NOT "Love"), and don't forget to add a comma after.
 - **Signature:** Leave several line spaces between the closing and your signature. Print your name below your signature.
4. Have students use their copies of **Student Handbook page 120, Thank-You Letter Model** and **Student Handbook page 121, Thank-You Letter Template** to write their own thank-you notes. Remind them to write neatly, and to check spelling and grammar.
5. When students have finished, **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Thank you for all your hard work during this job shadow unit.

If you confirmed that the career you investigated was a good fit, that's good to know. It's possible you ruled out a career you were considering, which is also good to know. And if you're not certain, don't be discouraged. Finding satisfying work is a lifelong process, and today is just one step on the Road to Success.

SKILLS CHECKLIST

Direct students' attention to **Portfolio page 25, Grade 11 Skills Checklist**. Have students complete the skills checklist questions for job shadow skills.

JOB SHADOW

I CAN...

Create a resume that reflects my accomplishments and experience.	<input type="checkbox"/> not at all	<input type="checkbox"/> somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> very well
Recognize appropriate workplace dress and behavior.	<input type="checkbox"/> not at all	<input type="checkbox"/> somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> very well
Prepare for an informational interview by doing company research and creating a list of questions.	<input type="checkbox"/> not at all	<input type="checkbox"/> somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> very well
Write a business-appropriate note thanking someone for their help.	<input type="checkbox"/> not at all	<input type="checkbox"/> somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> very well

Job Shadow Reaction

Directions: Complete each sentence prompt about your job shadow experience.

1. I was excited by _____

2. I was disappointed by _____

3. I was surprised by _____

4. I felt I 'belonged' in this workplace because _____

5. I felt 'out of place' in this workplace because _____

Thank-You Letter Model

May 8, 2012

Ms. Jillian Kornswieg
Researcher
Roads to Success
307 West 38th Street, Suite 1101
New York, NY 10018

Dear Ms. Kornswieg,

Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to teach me about your job. I enjoyed visiting Roads to Success, and learning about your day-to-day responsibilities.

The experience of helping you review and analyze information has convinced me that educational research is a career field I would find both challenging and fulfilling.

I appreciate the ideas you gave me about preparing for a career in educational research. At your suggestion, I plan to take an education class at my community college this summer.

Sincerely,

Samantha Smith

Thank-You Letter Template

Date (month day, year)

Host's Name

Host's Professional Title

Company Name

Street Address

City, State Zip Code

Dear [Mr., Mrs., Ms., Dr. (Host's last name)],

Paragraph 1: Thank your job shadow host for his or her time and helpfulness.

Paragraph 2: Tell what you got out of the job shadow experience.

Paragraph 3: Include additional comments here and thank your host again.

Sincerely,

Sign your name

Print your name

Personal Skills Checklist

Directions: Circle the skills you saw “in action” during your job shadow. Place a check in the column that describes your ability level in each skill you circled.

SKILLS	Good at this	Some skills	Few or no skills
MATH			
• Use fractions and percentages			
• Budget money			
• Use a calculator			
• Estimate materials needed			
• Use algebra to solve problems			
READING			
• Understand directions on signs			
• Order supplies from a catalog			
• Understand written directions or memos			
• Do research			
• Interpret maps and graphs			
WRITING			
• Write instructions			
• Write a letter			
• Take notes			
• Write a report			
TECHNOLOGY			
• Type accurately without looking at the keys			
• Use MS Word or other word processing program			
• Use MS Excel or other spreadsheet program			
• Design a web page			
• Troubleshoot computer problems			
• Send and receive professional voicemail messages			
• Send and receive professional e-mails			
PROFESSIONALISM			
• Come to work on time, return on time from breaks and lunch			
• Use language appropriate for work			
• Wear clothing appropriate for work			
• Treat customers and employees with respect			
•			
•			
•			

PERSONAL SKILLS CHECKLIST (continued)

SKILLS	Good at this	Some skills	Few or no skills
WORK ETHIC			
• Accept responsibility			
• Work hard even when no one is watching			
• Finish what you start			
PROBLEM SOLVING			
• Know what to do in an emergency			
• Think before acting			
• Resolve a conflict without getting angry			
• Choose between alternatives			
• Find creative ways to solve problems			
GROUP AND TEAM SKILLS			
• Be friendly			
• Cooperate with others			
• Pitch in where needed			
• Clarify responsibilities			
• Take direction			
• Demonstrate leadership			
JOB-SPECIFIC SKILLS (for example, change the oil on a car or edit a video)			
•			
•			
•			
•			

ADAPTED FROM: *Teens Working* Student Guide, pages 19-22, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, Portland, OR.

Below, write three skills you identified as requiring further development, and describe a strategy for improving each one. (Use the back of this page if needed.)

Skill	Strategy for Improvement
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____

