Career & College Readiness Lesson Plans
Learn to Reach Out

Grade Level 12

Overview

Students will research professional associations through the lens of networking and social media and conduct an informational interview.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Identify professional associations that align with industry sectors and careers.
- Utilize social media to conduct research on a professional association.
- Describe the importance of professional networking.
- Develop a list of people to interview and conduct an informational interview.

Language Objectives

At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Articulate questions and document information gathered through research and the oral interview.

Standards Alignment

- California Common Core State Standards: College & Career Readiness Anchor Standards:
  - RI 2, 3; W 4, 6, 7, 9; SL 1, 2, 4; L 4
- California Career Technical Education Anchor Standards:
  - 2, 3, 4
- California Standards for Career Ready Practice:
  - 1, 2, 4
- National Career Development Guidelines:
  - PS 3; CM 3; CM 5
- International Society for Technology in Education Standards:
  - 2, 3
- English Language Development Standards:
  - Part 1: 1, 2, 5
  - Part 2: 1, 6
• American School Counselor Association Mindsets & Behaviors:
  o M 5; BLS 5

Materials

1. Computer with Internet access for students
2. Computer with Internet access and projection capability for instructor
3. Projector and screen
4. Student Handouts
   • Professional Association Research (p. 6)
   • My Network (p. 7)
   • Use Informational Interviews to Learn About a Career or Company (pp. 8–10)
5. Online Resources
   • Learn to Reach Out Start-Up Video [WMV; 01:08]
     https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u3kgSRqxCLE
   • What Students Have to Say about Professional Associations, [WMV; 02:54]
     https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v97b_6PHLeo
   • Find Professional Associations, CareerOneStop
     http://www.careeronestop.org/businesscenter/professionalassociations/find-professional-associations.aspx
   • Assess Yourself, California CareerZone
     http://www.cacareerzone.org/assessments
   • Informational Interviews, CareerOneStop
   • Employer Locator, CareerOneStop
     http://www.careeronestop.org/toolkit/jobs/find-businesses.aspx

Academic Vocabulary

• Informational interview: is an informal conversation with someone working in an area that interests you who will give you information and advice. It is an effective research tool which can help you decide if you want to pursue a particular career. It is not a job interview, and the objective is not to find job openings.
• **Networking**: is an activity by which groups of like-minded businesspeople recognize, create, or act upon business opportunities.

• **Professional association**: also called a professional body, professional organization, or professional society is usually a nonprofit organization seeking to further a particular profession, the interests of individuals engaged in that profession, and the public interest.

• **Social media**: are forms of electronic communication (as Web sites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content.

### Activity

Students will use the CareerOneStop Web site to research professional associations and informational interviewing. They will identify social media tools used by associations, develop a personal networking list, and conduct an informational interview. Students will write a summary of the informational interview and summarize their experience in an oral presentation to the class.

### Getting Ready

- Preview the videos, “Learn to Reach Out” and “What Students Have to Say about Professional Associations” (links in Materials section).
- Review the online resources and familiarize yourself with the content.
- For this lesson, students will need access to professional association social media Web sites. Make sure your school or district does not blocked access to the social media Web sites you want to use. If access is blocked, discuss your needs with the school or district Webmaster and ask what arrangements can be made to access a variety of professional association social media Web sites.

### Lesson Procedures

#### Part I — Professional Associations

1. Introduce the lesson by showing the “Learn to Reach Out” start-up video (link in Materials section) and confirm students understand what to expect. Or introduce the lesson without the video by describing the topic and activity.


3. Use student responses to begin a discussion on professional associations. Here is some information about the role of professional associations:
Professional associations are conduits for profession-wide communication and management. Through events, conferences, and publications, associations provide members with news, best practices, and new ideas. These associations are member networks where professionals connect, collaborate, and grow professionally.

Show students the “What Students Have to Say about Professional Associations” video (link in Materials section)

4. To provide background and an example, go to the “Professional Associations” page on the CareerOneStop Web site (link in Materials section) and select one professional association and walk through it with your students.

5. When the discussion is complete, instruct students to conduct research on a professional organization that represents an occupation they are interested in pursuing. If students do not have an occupation in mind, send them to the Quick Assessment on the California CareerZone (link in Materials section) to find an occupation that interests them.

6. Distribute the “Professional Association Research” handout. Review and instruct students to complete only Part I at this time. Have students use the CareerOneStop Web site (link in Materials section) to locate an association and write down the name of a professional association, what career or industry it represents, its mission or vision, and what the requirements are to become a member. Have students share the information they gathered with a partner.

Part II — Social Media

7. Ask students to name some social media tools (such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, and twitter). Tell students that just as businesses use social media to promote themselves, so do professional associations.

Instruct students to look for the professional association they choose on social media Web sites. If the association they chose does not have a social media page, instruct students to select a different association.

Go to Part II on the “Professional Association Research” handout and have students record information from the social media page, including how many “likes” or “followers” the association has. Students will share the information gathered with a partner.

Part III — Networking

8. Reconvene the class and discuss the definition of networking. Note that social media is one way to network with other people who have similar interests and goals. Explain to students they should also build networks with people they know.
Distribute the “My Network” handout and instruct students to develop a list of people they consider to be networking contacts. Have students share their list with a partner.

**Part IV — Informational Interviews**

9. Distribute and review the “Use Informational Interviews to Learn about a Career or Company” handout. Check for understanding and be ready to help students find an interview candidate. Students will take the assignment home and conduct the interview. Students will document the information gathered in the interview and prepare an oral presentation for the class.

10. Wrap Up. In this lesson, you learned about professional associations, their purpose, function, and value to you as a resource for succeeding in a chosen career field. Remember that professional associations can be a key resource for networking and continuing education.

11. Remind students to put their work products in their career portfolios whether they are using a paper folder or an online filing system.

**Estimated Time**

Two to three class sessions

**Evaluation:**

- Students will research and share information about professional organizations, social media, and networking.
- Students will participate in class discussions.

**Additional Resources:**

- [Networking for Success](https://www.calcareercenter.org/Home/Content?contentID=124), California Career Center
- [Social Media and Career Success](https://www.calcareercenter.org/Home/Content?contentID=411), California Career Center

This lesson and all other lessons and materials are posted on the California Career Resource Network Web site at [www.californiacareers.info](http://www.californiacareers.info).
Professional Association Research

Research a professional association and be prepared to share your findings with the class.

Part I

Name of Professional Association:

Occupation/Industry the Association represents:

Mission/Vision of the Association:

Membership Requirements:

Part II

Social Media Used by the Association:

- How many Likes?
- How many followers?
- Look at “About”. Write down one fact about the organization.

- Write down five of the top comments about the association (usually appear on the home page).

- What does this social media Web site tell you about your industry that the non-social media Web site did not tell you?
My Network

Start building your own network by developing an initial list of professional contacts. The list could include teachers, counselors, current or past employers, community service supervisors, and adult leaders in organizations you belong to. List as many people as you can.
Use Informational Interviews to Learn About a Career or Company

You have two goals for this interview. The first is to learn about the occupation to see if it might suit you. The second is to establish a connection with the person you’re interviewing.

Who to Ask

Interviews take time, so target only individuals who have occupations you really want to pursue. Use your professional and personal networks. Look at the professional associations you just researched. Go to the CareerOneStop’s Employer Locator to find industry contacts. The Web site address is http://www.careerinfonet.org/employerlocator/.

How do I set up an informational interview?

Here are some guidelines:

- When you call, say how you got that person’s name.
- Explain that you’re seeking information and guidance.
- Ask to meet for 20 minutes and stick to it (wear a watch).
- Bring paper and pen with you and take notes.
- Research the occupations and organization beforehand as you would for a job interview.
- Dress and act as you would at a job interview.
- DON’T ask the person for a job in any way.

Make contact

Either call or e-mail to make contact. Your introduction could be something like this:

“Mrs. Smith, Mr. Johnson suggested I speak with you. My name is ____________ and I am interested in the ________ field. I could use advice from someone who is in this field. Do you have time in the next two weeks to meet for about 20 minutes? I would really like to learn more about your company and the ________ field from someone already working in it.”

During the interview

- Make a good impression. This person may provide additional referrals that could lead to a job.
- Stay on topic and keep it short. Respect their time.
- Follow proper business etiquette.
Use Informational Interviews to Learn About a Career or Company, p. 2

Hold the meeting

After introductions, give a brief summary of your career goal or what you want to learn from them. Prepare plenty of questions and select carefully to make good use of the limited time. Respect their time. Here are some sample questions:

About the field

- Is your job typical of others in this field?
- What is your typical day like?
- What do you like the most/least about this field?
- Are there related fields I might want to look into?
- What are the future trends for this field?
- How do you keep your knowledge current?
- What are employers looking for in this field? (skills, education, experience)

About the job

- What three skills do you use most often?
- What are current job prospects like?
- What's the best way to find out about jobs in this field?
- What is the career ladder for this position?
- What would you recommend I do at this point to get into this field?
- What makes a resume impressive in your field?
- Is my resume appropriate for this occupation?
- Is there anyone else you would recommend I talk to in this field?

About the company

- What's the corporate culture like here?
- What is the average turnover in this job?
- How do you normally hire for this occupation?
- Which firms do you think are your toughest competitors, and how do they differ from your company?

Ending the interview

When your scheduled time is almost up, end the interview:

- Thank the person before you leave.
- Ask for referrals to others who might be available for an informational interview.
- Ask for the person’s business card.
- Tell the interviewee what actions you will take based on their recommendations.
Use Informational Interviews to Learn About a Career or Company, p. 3

After the interview

- Immediately send a thank you note.
- Evaluate how well you conducted the interview.
- Decide how to weigh what the interviewee said. Take what you heard with a grain of salt and trust your own judgment.
- Review the notes you took and decide on your next step.
- When you eventually do get a job, tell your interviewees about it—they’ll want to know how your search ended!

This information is provided by the CareerOneStop and the California Career Center. Their respective Web addresses are http://www.careeronestop.org/jobsearch/network/informational-interviews.aspx and https://www.calcareercenter.org/.