



Guest Speaker Guide

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Tips for teachers and faculty that encourages ways to connect the experience to the larger curriculum

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Employer Fact Sheet

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An options sheet for WBL Connectors describing remote and virtual guest speaker approaches and activities

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Supplemental resources designed to help support remote or virtual activities

¹ Learners include K-12, community college and college students; youth and young adults engaged in workforce development programs; and adults participating in career development activities.



Guest Speaker Fact Sheet

Guest Speakers

Using guest speakers to support learning is a structured Career Awareness activity in which learners² listen to a presentation to hear about the speaker's career, business or organization and industry. They have the opportunity to ask questions to help them consider whether they might like to pursue a career in the industry.

Designed to meet specific learning outcomes, guest speaker presentations are educationally rich, are tied to the curriculum, and help learners connect what they're learning in school with the workplace. Presentations are usually conducted at the school, but in some cases guest speakers may visit a classroom via Skype, Zoom, WebEx, Microsoft Teams or some other technology, and the activity is conducted through the use of a remote classroom. There are also virtual simulations available where a recording of a live guest speaker activity can be viewed on-line and serve as a foundation for an activity and/or discussion in the remote classroom.

Guest speaker presentations are one activity in the continuum of authentic work-based experiences provided to all learners engaged in career-related programs or course of study with Earn & Learn partners.

Guest Speaker presentations are designed to:

- Provide exposure to potential careers and jobs.
- Provide a realistic picture of a business, its role in the community and the career paths and occupations of its workforce.
- Help learners make the connection between their education and the workplace.
- Inform career planning.

Guest Speaker presentations are structured to:

- Allow learners to listen, receive information and ask questions.
- Enable learners to begin identifying areas of career interest.
- Build knowledge about the education and training needed for a particular job, career path and entry into the industry.

Guest Speaker presentations are supported by:

- Learner preparation, including research on the industry and participating businesses.
- Employer orientation and support to prepare for the particular audience.
- Post presentation reflection opportunities that include verbal and written options.

Guest Speaker presentations are connected to:

- Individual career development/training plans.
- A continuum of future work-based learning activities that build over time
- The learner's next steps.

² Learners include K-12, community college and college students; youth and young adults engaged in workforce development programs; and adults participating in career development activities.

Guest Speaker Support Materials

Checklists, Tip Sheets and Fact Sheets:

- Connector Guest Speaker Checklist
- Learner Guest Speaker Checklist
- Teacher/Faculty Guest Speaker Tip Sheet
- Employer Guest Speaker Tip Sheet
- Employer Guest Speaker Fact Sheet
- Guest Speaker Remote and Virtual Options Sheet

Implementation Tools

- Guest Speaker Research Activity
- Guest Speaker Learner Reflection
- Remote and Virtual Fact Sheets

Tips for Success **Work-Based Learning Essential Elements**

Effective Guest Speaker activities include structured activity before, during and after the experience. Pay attention to these tips to ensure meaningful experiences that result in enriched learning.

- ✓ Conduct Effective Planning
- ✓ Prepare for Success
- ✓ Identify Learning Objectives.
- ✓ Create Authentic and Engaging Experiences
- ✓ Connect to Careers
- ✓ Support Learner Growth
- ✓ Ensure Activities are Safe and Legal
- ✓ Provide Ongoing Support
- ✓ Provide for Reflection, Presentation and Feedback
- ✓ Connect to the Learner Next Step
- ✓ Assess and Document the Experience

Sustaining and growing Guest Speaker activities and all other work-based learning activities depend on maintaining positive relationships with the participating employers. These employers should be treated as valued customers and partners with frequent check-ins to address their needs and support participation.

Work-based Learning Connector Guest Speaker Checklist

Quick tips for Work-Based Learning Connectors to ensure a successful guest speaker presentation.

Before the Guest Speaker Presentation

- Identify all interested teachers and faculty and help them plan for their guest speaker presentations.
- Make sure the speakers are good matches for the classes. What classroom topics can the speaker support?
- Prepare teachers and encourage them to participate before, during and after the guest speaker presentation.
- Share the Teacher/Faculty Tip Sheet.
- Have teachers/faculty help create learning objectives and work with learners³ to prepare for the day.
- Share speaker bio and prompt questions with learners.
- Ask teacher/faculty to take pictures during the presentation. Get signed releases for all photos.
- Provide employers an information packet about the school, including background on the class they will be speaking to, the number of learners, their grade level(s), and career interests.
- Confirm employer attendance and determine presentation needs. Let them know where to park and share any visitor procedures they need to follow.
- Make sure the employer volunteers are supported and prepared. Share the Employer Tip Sheet, any questions to expect and encourage them to create an engaging and interactive presentation—using visuals and props.
- Arrange for someone to meet the speaker when they arrive, and escort them to the classroom, or meet them online prior to the presentation.
- Ask for permission to record and share the presentation with others in the future.
- If conducting the activity via the internet, test and practice with the interface prior to the presentation.

After the Guest Speaker Presentation

- Enter guest speaker presentation in ELENA.
- Send a request for feedback from guest speakers and teachers. Review feedback and make recommendations for improvements.
- Help learners update their career development plan and think about any next steps they would like to take to further their career goals.
- Work with teachers/faculty to coordinate “go deeper” activities to connect the guest speaker presentation to the classroom.
- Send thank-you notes to guest speakers.
- Send pictures to the companies for their websites or newsletters. Ensure you have signed releases for all photos.

Sample Guest Speaker Timeline

Beginning of the school year:

Identify interested teachers and appropriate speakers. Brainstorm business partners who could participate.

Two months in advance:

Invite business partners to participate. Secure date, time and location.

One month in advance:

Confirm participation of speakers. Have learners research the industry or company.

One week in advance:

Send speakers logistics for the day and questions to expect. Confirm any presentation needs.

On day of presentation:

Ensure that guest speakers are welcomed and escorted to classroom. If online, test systems and launch interface prior to the activity.

After day of presentation:

Send thank-you notes to all guest speakers and ensure Learner Reflection activities take place.

³ Learners include K-12, community college and college students; youth and young adults engaged in workforce development programs; and adults participating in career development activities.

- Confirm guest speaker's company social media policy. Ask speaker to send URLs to social pages so learners can properly tag them.
- Publicize the guest speaker presentation and the businesses that participated by placing a story in the local newspaper or posting on the school or agency webpage.
- Consider other potential public relations benefits and opportunities.

Tips for Conducting an Online Guest Speaker Activity

- Select and personally practice using the selected technology.
- Make sure all learners have access to appropriate technology.
- Decide how you will have learners pose questions – Verbally or by entering on their device.
- Do a test run with your learners as well as the guest speaker
- Preload any slides or presentations from the speaker.
- Decide how you want to manage the session. Sometimes it takes one person to moderate the session and another to monitor the technology and address questions.
- Decide which Learner reflection activities will take place and how you will support them.
- Remember, it's possible that parents or guardians will be around who might be a good resource for potential future speakers,
- Make sure you get feedback on the activity from the speaker and the learners.
- Record and post the presentation for others to view and use in their classrooms (Note: be sure to record and share the speaker portion of the activity and not the learner interaction)

Learner⁴ Guest Speaker Checklist

When guest speakers visit the classroom, either in person or online, you get a chance to learn about their careers and workplaces. This is a great way to figure out how interested you are in what they do.

You'll have the opportunity to ask questions, practice professional behavior and become more comfortable communicating with professionals.

Have you done all you can to prepare?

- Do some research on the company or organization that the guest speaker works for. Check out their website and learn as much as you can about the company or organization, its history, what they do and how it impacts your community.
- Look up the speaker on LinkedIn to learn more about them. Consider what questions you have about their career journey
- Come up with some questions about the company or organization, the industry, career opportunities, and what kind of education and training is needed.
- Practice "active listening" and how you will make sure that you're getting everything out of the session that you can.
- If you are participating in an online activity, make sure you have practiced using the technology and are ready 5 Minutes before start time.

Have you thought about what you can do to make the guest speaker presentation a big success?

- Dress appropriately. Be respectful. Make sure your phone is off, don't wear headphones, and don't interrupt.
- When it's time, ask one of your prepared questions or any others that occur to you. Pay attention to what you hear. Can you see yourself working at the speaker's company?
- Make connections between what you're hearing about and what you're learning in class.
- At the end of the presentation, ask for a business card or LinkedIn connection so you can follow up later. This may come in handy, even with employers who don't excite you now.

When the guest speaker presentation is over, how will you keep moving your career forward?

- Reflect on the day. Talk to your classmates and teachers about the presentation and whether you're interested in pursuing a career in that industry.
- Participate in classroom activities that help you think about the value of the presentation.
- Update your career development plan and think about your next steps.
- Send a follow-up email thanking the employer for his or her time. If you're interested in working at their company or learning more about their job, say so and ask for next steps.
- Fill out any evaluation forms. Be honest. That will help make future guest speaker presentations more meaningful experiences.
- Share your experience with your peers on social media. Perhaps a blog post about the event?

Are you Ready for Game Day?

Have you...

- Researched the guest speaker's company?
- Crafted your questions?
- Considered the best way to make a good impression on the guest speaker when you connect after the presentation?
- Thought about how you'll share your experience on social media?

On-Line Tips

Have you...

- Arranged for internet access and tested your device?
- Practiced with the online tool you are using?
- Learned how to pose a question or raise your hand?
- Reviewed the on-line practices fact sheet?

⁴ Learner includes K-12, community college and college students; youth and young adults engaged in workforce development programs; and adults participating in career development activities.

Teacher/Faculty Guest Speaker Tip Sheet

Note: If you are coordinating a guest speaker presentation, review the Work-based Learning Connector Guest Speaker Checklist.

Guest Speaker presentations are designed to:

- Provide exposure to potential careers and jobs.
- Provide a realistic picture of the business, its role in the community and the career paths of its workforce.
- Help learners⁵ make the connection between school and the workplace.
- Inform career planning.

Before the Guest Speaker Presentation

- Review the Guest Speaker Fact Sheet and this tip sheet.
- Assess how the day can support classroom activities and help meet curriculum goals.
- Identify desired Learner learning objectives. Build excitement for the activity and talk to learners about what they can expect to learn.
- Have learners research the speaker's company and the careers it offers. Have them prepare at least three questions for the employer.
- Send information about the school and what learners are studying to the speaker and provide background on the type of class they will be speaking to, the number of , grade level(s), and career interests.
- If conducting the activity online, make sure both you and your learners are comfortable with and have practiced using the technology.

During the Guest Speaker Presentation

- Explain how the presentation will be conducted, including expectations about learner behavior. (Clear expectations are helpful for both the speaker and the audience!)
- Support the guest speaker in effective interactions with learners.
- Encourage learners to ask questions.
- Hand out materials that will aid the presentation: activity sheets, industry facts, company brochures, sample products, etc.
- Distribute and collect feedback forms from learners and speakers.

After the Guest Speaker Presentation

- Thank the guest speaker and together identify follow-up activities for the learners.
- Provide individual and group reflection activities for learners and help them make the connection between their education and the workplace.
- Help learners update their career development plan and think about any next steps they would like to take to further their career goals.
- Have learners write thank-you notes to the employer partners. Emphasize that sending timely thank-you notes is an important professional skill.
- Assess the impact and value of the guest speaker presentation with the Connector and

The Classroom Connection: Preparation and Reflection

Before Guest Speaker presentation

Set learners up for success by having them:

- Research company and industry of visiting speaker.
- Discuss how the presentation can help them meet learning objectives.

After Guest Speaker presentation

- Spark Learner reflection with an activity.
- Ask, "What new things did you learn about this job and industry?"
- See if they want to find out more or further explore careers in the speaker's industry.

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- utilize employer, staff and Learner feedback to improve future presentations.
- Document and archive information about the guest speaker presentation.

Go Deeper

- Make the guest speaker activity part of a project and have learners prepare and deliver a presentation to others at your school about the person that visited and their company.
- Consider having learners create profiles on all of the guest speakers from the year, posting them in a place where learners can see a visual representation of the variety of career paths.

Employer Guest Speaker Tip Sheet

Thanks for agreeing to present as a guest speaker. As you think about how to best prepare for your presentation, keep the following success factors in mind.

Before the Presentation

- Provide the Teacher/Faculty with website link(s) about your company, industry and profession to help learners⁶ prepare for your presentation.
- Build talking points that will engage the learners. Find out what they're currently focused on in the classroom so you can link to the curriculum.
- Ask for presentation tips and for help to address any concerns you may have.
- Review where to park and enter the school. If you have special requirements for the presentation, such as a projector or computer set-up, let the Connector know.
- Bring your business cards; the learners may ask for them. If you're handing out materials, ask for an estimate of the number you'll need.
- If you're "visiting" the classroom electronically, via Skype, Zoom, WebEx, Microsoft Teams or some other technology, arrange for a test run prior to the presentation to work out any kinks.

Suggested Talking Points:

- Describe your career journey.
- Talk about obstacles you overcame.
- Discuss need for perseverance, hard work and getting along well with others.
- Manage expectations about the world of work.

Tips to Share:

- Avoid job hopping.
- Build your network (talk about how to do that).
- Be a continuous learner and stay abreast of industry changes.

During the Presentation

- Introduce yourself, your company and job title. Let the learners know what to expect from your presentation.
- Try not to read from prepared notes and if you're using insider lingo, define those industry terms and acronyms.
- Use visual aids such as a product, tool or any materials from your company that will help the learners understand what you do.
- Describe a typical day at your company and help learners understand as much as they can about the culture of the workplace and the world of work.
- Share the educational and career path you took to your current position.
- If possible, share mistakes you've made and how you have addressed problems.
- If possible, make your presentation interactive with role playing, mock projects, hands-on activities, etc. Ask questions of the learners, making it a two-way dialogue.

Engagement Tips

- Don't talk for longer than 3-4 minutes straight, without pausing for some sort of interaction (a question, a comment, etc.)
- Share a "fun fact" about yourself – something you enjoy doing outside of work today, or something you liked to do when you were their age.
- Use humor, if you're comfortable.

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- Ask for non-verbal audience feedback to keep the audience engaged and check for understanding, for example ask for thumbs up or down, or have them use a 1-5 finger rating scale.
- Repeat things more than you think you have to.
- Use stories as examples.
- Utilize visuals where you can, whether that's physical objects or photos. Simply including logos or clipart keeps learners more engaged.
- Utilize "wait time!" If you ask the group a question, they will almost definitely sit silently at first. Don't be afraid to wait 30-60 seconds for someone to raise their hand, or you can cold call students to share.
- Don't be afraid to make it conversational by peppering your presentation with questions for the listeners. Examples of probing questions could include:
 - o *What do you already know about this job?*
 - o *Does anyone here know someone who works in _____? What do they like/dislike about it?*
 - o *What skills do you think are important for the job?*
 - o *Has anyone here experienced _____too? What was it like?*

After the Presentation

- Provide feedback to the Connector to improve future guest speaker presentations.
- Consider how you might use this presentation to promote your company's visibility.

Go Deeper

- Talk to the Connector about being a guest trainer, helping with curriculum, or hosting learners for Job Shadows, Jobs or Internships.

Employer Guest Speaker Fact Sheet

When guest speakers visit a classroom, learners⁷ listen to a presentation to learn about the speaker's career, business and industry, and ask questions to help them consider whether they might like to pursue a career path in the industry.

Designed to meet specific learning objectives, guest speaker presentations are linked to the curriculum and help learners connect what they're learning in school with the workplace. Presentations are usually conducted at the school but in some cases, guest speakers may visit a classroom via Skype, Zoom, WebEx, Microsoft Teams or some other technology; and the activity is conducted through a remote classroom.

Program Level: All Grades.
Employer to Learner Ratio: 1 - 3 employers to 40-100 learners.
Duration: Usually 1 hour
Frequency: One time
Location: School/Classroom/Online
Costs: Staff time
Special Considerations: Employee selection. Company volunteer policies and practices.

Why are guest speaker presentations important for learners?

- Exposes learners to potential careers and jobs and help build occupational knowledge.
- Illustrates the education and training needed for entry into certain industries.
- Provides a context for learning and fosters an understanding of how academic concepts are applied in a real-world setting.
- Lets learners know about your company's processes and products/services and the role your business plays in the community.

What are the benefits to my company?

- Exposes potential future workers to job opportunities and careers with your company, as well as the required skills and education to be successful in your industry.
- Introduces learners to one or more of your employees.
- Helps your employees understand how to communicate with the next generation of workers.
- Provides an efficient way to introduce and engage multiple employees with your commitment to education and connect your company with the community.

What do I need to do next?

- Determine who will coordinate the guest speaker presentation for your company and have them connect with the work-based learning Connector to address scheduling, planning and logistics.
- Arrange for a presentation to those employees who will participate as guest speakers.
- Distribute the Employer Guest Speaker Tip Sheet to interested employees.
- Consider any impacts on company policy.

Resources

- Review the Employer Participation Options Fact Sheet to learn more about how to get the most out of your partnership with Earn & Learn.

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Remote and Virtual Guest Speaker Options Sheet

Translating a Guest Speaker Activity to remote or virtual settings is perhaps the most straightforward of all the Work-Based Learning activities. While presentations are usually conducted at the school, in some cases guest speakers may visit a classroom via Skype, Zoom, WebEx, Microsoft Teams or some other technology; and the activity is conducted through the use of a remote classroom. There are also virtual simulations available where a recording of a live guest speaker activity can be viewed on-line and serve as a foundation for an activity and/or discussion in the classroom

Remote Guest Speaker Options

Remember, remote activities promote “live” learner⁸ contact with adult professionals and front-line workers via the use of technology.

Guest Speaker Remote Classroom

An industry or employer partner visits a remote classroom as a guest speaker and provides a presentation on the speaker’s career, business or organization and industry. Learners ask questions to help them consider whether they might like to pursue a career in the industry.

Steps to Success

- Review the Guest Speaker Guide. Distribute and review checklists and tip sheets to all parties
- WBL Connector and/or Teachers recruit and schedule Industry Partner(s)
- WBL Connector and/or Teachers select and test platform
- Industry Partner visits remote classroom
- Industry Partner Introduces self, provides presentation
- Learners ask questions and interact with the speaker, moderated by WBL Connector or Teacher
- Teacher Supports reflection activities and helps learners update their employability skills profile

Special Considerations

- Get employer permission to record and reuse the session
- Select and test appropriate technology with all parties
- Decide how learners will pose questions (raise hand, chat box etc.)
- Decide who will moderate and who will provide tech support during the session
- Conduct a dry run with learners

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Virtual and Hybrid Guest Speaker Activity Options

Guest Speaker Virtual Activities

Remember, virtual activities are generally simulations and provide learners with employer exposures through recordings, on-line research and classroom activities.

- Identify and select a recorded guest speaker to use as a foundation for an activity and discussion in the classroom. See the resource section below.
- Have learners search the web for recordings of guest speakers and provide a presentation to the class where they show the video and then lead a discussion about the speaker's career. What did they learn? What else would they like to know? How can they gather more information?

Guest Speaker Hybrid Activities

Hybrid options are those that combine some virtual activities with some live remote interactions with employers.

- In some cases, it may be possible to arrange for a guest speaker to return to the remote classroom for a short amount of time to answer specific questions from a new group of learners participating in a virtual Guest Speaker activity. If you have recorded the session and are able to have the speaker return, set up a convenient time, have learners view the Guest Speaker session, start a discussion and then bring the speaker in to answer questions and engage in a dialogue with the learners.
- Arrange to record the remote activity and archive for future use. Make this recording the foundation for a remote classroom activity, where learners view the presentation and then have a discussion about what they've learned and share what else they would like to know.

Tips for Conducting an Online Guest Speaker Activity

- Select and personally practice using the selected technology.
- Make sure all learners have access to appropriate technology.
- Decide how you will have learners pose questions – Verbally or by entering on their device.
- Do a test run with your learners as well as the speaker.
- Preload any slides or presentations from the speaker.
- Decide how you want to manage the session. Sometimes it takes one person to moderate the session and another to monitor the technology and address questions.
- Decide which learner reflection activities will take place and how you will support them.
- Remember, it's possible that parents or guardians will be around and might be a good resource for potential future speakers,
- Make sure you get feedback on the activity from the speaker and the learners.
- Record and post the presentation for others to view and use in their classrooms

Resources and Links

Earn & Learn WBL Library - Collection of Guest Speaker Videos
<https://earnlearn.us/work-based-learning-library>

Earn & Learn Stories
Guest Speaker Blogs
<https://earnlearn.us/news>

Grant Associates/DOE Industry Professionals Speaker Videos
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCKhLFrSEoKGbFqv4qqmO2vw/featured>

Four Tips for Hosting Remote Guest Speakers
<https://at.blogs.wm.edu/four-planning-tips-for-hosting-remote-guest-speakers/>

Here's a couple of examples of an industry association website that provides Guest Speakers on careers in the industry. Consider having your learners do some internet research in your pathway cluster or industry to see if they can find a collection of similar videos. Have them share what they found with the class.

American Bankers Association
<https://www.aba.com/training-events/career-workforce-development/find-your-future-video-series>

BayWork
Careers in the water and Wastewater Industries
<https://baywork.org/careers/>

Guest Speaker Research Activity

Complete the following research assignment as part of your preparation for the upcoming guest speaker visit. This research will be the basis for in-class or on-line discussion and presentations prior to the guest speaker's visit.

Learner name:
Guest speaker's company:
Company's web address:
Company's physical address:
Company's mission statement:
What is the company's primary business?
What departments exist within the company?
What companies do you think are in competition with the guest speaker's company?
After researching the company, what are three questions that you will ask the guest speaker?
Based on your research, what do you think you will like most about the guest speaker's presentation?
Based on your research, what is your biggest concern about the guest speaker's presentation?
If you could come away from the guest speaker presentation having learned one thing, what would that be?
Anything else you learned while doing your research that you'd like to share?

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Guest Speaker Learner Reflection

Now that the guest speaker presentation is over, take some time reflect on what you learned and how the experience might inform your college and career plans in the future.

Learner Name:

School:

Guest Speaker Company:

Date of Presentation:

What aspects of the guest speaker presentation were interesting? Which were not? Why?

What did you like about the guest speaker presentation? What would you change?

Would you consider a career in the guest speaker's field? Why or why not?

What was the most memorable aspect of the guest speaker experience? Why?

What did you learn about the guest speaker's company and its employees? Please explain.

What knowledge and skills are you learning in school that are likely to be used at the guest speaker's workplace? Please explain.

What knowledge or skills do you need to strengthen to be successful at a workplace like the guest speaker's? Please explain.

Would you recommend that learners hear this presentation in the future? Explain.

Anything else you'd like to say about the guest speaker presentation?

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