

The Grade

Speaker's Guideline

The purpose of The Grade's professional seminar is to invite professional men to share their experience with high school students. In our seminars, these speakers typically show how they found their careers and how they and their colleagues strive to live the ideals of professionalism – that is, how the virtues, a spirit of service, and good etiquette are lived in the workplace. This sort of insight is what young people need and are looking for as they plan their careers.

Below is a suggested guideline as you prepare your talk. You do not need to include each point.

Why is this profession interesting?

- What is it about your profession that makes it interesting, including to high school students. What's relevant to them?
- Describe a challenging situation from your job and then ask the students, "What would you do in this situation?"
- Pick a well-known aspect of students' everyday life and show how your profession affects it directly or at least indirectly.

What is the day-to-day life of a person in this profession?

- Describe the atmosphere at your place of work. What's it like?
- What type of decisions do you make on a regular basis? How do they matter?
- Describe a challenging professional situation you have faced and how you went about solving it.
- How does your profession make a difference in people's lives? For example, relate some real-life stories of how you or a colleague personally helped (1) another colleague, (2) a client, and/or (3) the profession in general.
- How are the virtues, a spirit of service, and professional etiquette lived in your workplace?
E.g., narrate specific examples from your experience that show the importance of integrity (telling the truth and keeping your word), good manners and appearance, including good dress and pleasant social dealings. If possible, please cite instances where a lack of integrity or social skills caused colleagues, especially beginners, to meet with setbacks in their jobs or careers.

What is the purpose of this profession? What service does it provide society?

How does one know if this profession is for him?

- How specifically did you come to find your life's work? That is, tell your personal story – how you gradually found what you are good at, and how the advice or encouragement of friends, including teachers and "mentors," led you

11th grade

to your career. You might also include a description of the training you received which prepared you for this profession.

- What skills and virtues does one need to succeed in this profession? How does one develop these skills? What personality types fit best into this profession?
- As you look back on your high school years, what did you do that helped prepare you for this profession? What did you fail to do and now regret (or did do and now wish you hadn't), as regards this profession?
- Are any universities especially good at preparing people for this profession?
- Are there summer or after-school opportunities for current high school students interested in learning more about this profession? It would be interesting to suggest some research projects or books that might help them learn more about the field.

General Comments:

- Use stories to make your points, not just statements and explanations.
- Make presentation interactive. This is achieved by asking students questions. For instance, instead of making the statement, "Professionals in this field do 'x'," ask the students the following: "What do you think professional in this field do most?"
- Think of your questions ahead of time. They are a key component to your presentation. The more interesting the question, the more interesting will be your presentation.
- If you ask the class a question and no one responds, simply ask a particular person. If he doesn't seem to know the answer, that's fine, just ask someone else. Even if in the end no one has an answer, the very exercise of asking people individually shows the class that you are addressing them individually and not just as a class. This subtle message helps create a more interactive tone in the classroom.
- If you can address students by their first name, the more interactive the class will be as a whole.
- Use examples that relate to high school students' everyday experience.
- Allow time for questions. Some speakers like to receive questions and comments during their presentation. Others prefer to wait until they finish before opening the floor for questions. The choice is yours, whichever approach you find more comfortable.