

# Activities to prepare you students for work experience

The following tasks can be used as activities or as a series of sessions to introduce your students to the idea of work experience.

They can be adapted for use in registration sessions or assemblies.

## 1. Research and questions task

**(Total: 20 – 35 minutes)**

A practical activity to get your students thinking about the work experience placement they are going on.

**Activity:** Ask each student to find out three key facts about their work experience placement. (Five – 10 minutes)

They should be able to find information online through the company's website. If there isn't much information online, ask them to research general information about the type of industry this company or business is based in.

Next, ask each student to write a short paragraph on what they found out about their work experience placement. (Five – 10 minutes)

Ask them to swap their paragraph with a partner, and read each other's work. (Five minutes)

In pairs, ask them to think about three questions they might like to ask their mentor during their work experience which will help them learn more about the business or company they will be on placement for. For example:

How many staff work here?

What's the busiest day for the business?

What's the best thing about working there?

(Five – ten minutes)

## 2. Creating their own rules of behaviour

**(Total: 15 – 30 minutes)**

Get students thinking about how they should conduct themselves on work experience to create a good impression.

Students should understand by the end of this task not only how to behave, but work experience is a privilege for students to take part in and be invited into the workplace.

**Activity:** Ask students to write down one way they should behave in a professional manner under each of the headings: (Five –ten minutes)

### **How shall I...**

act

dress

### **What...**

questions shall I ask on work experience?

mobile phone etiquette should I adopt during my work experience?

is the social media policy shall I follow on work experience?

Then ask them to work in groups of three – four and share their answers with one another. Students may find they have created some of the same rules as their peer groups. Similar rules should be collated as one. Each heading can have more than one rule. (Five – ten minutes)

Once complete, ask one member of each group to read out their 'rules' to the class. These can be written on a board or large pieces of paper. Similar rules receive a tick. If some of the answers do not apply to work experience, they can be ruled out. (Five – ten minutes)

This peer-to-peer approach allows students to learn from their classmates while reinforcing ideas of how they should act in a professional environment.

This will help them create their own rules of behaviour and understand the expectations required from them.

Students should understand by the end of the activity that as well as representing the school, they're representing themselves in a professional manner. This activity works best before activity 3.

### 3. Role-play interviews

**(Total: 30 – 50 minutes)**

Role-play is a great way to give students practical examples of what to expect while on work experience. It can also help give student's confidence and ease their nerves at what they may find a daunting situation. This task works particularly well when paired with activity 2.

**Activity:** Talk to the class about the importance of making a good impression by tasking them with a mini interview. (Five – ten minutes)

Highlight the importance of body language and how this demonstrates you are keen and confident to start the placement (even though some of them may not be feeling this way.) Something as simple as understanding and practicing how to greet your employer when you arrive can really help improve student's confidence.

Start by splitting the class into groups of three: A, Bs, and Cs. 'As' are the employers, 'Bs' are the students, and 'Cs' are the observers. (20 – 30 minutes)

Ask the 'students' to enter the classroom and introduce themselves to the 'employers'. Make sure you have coached them prior to this, on the importance of:

- shaking hands with their employer

- maintaining eye contact

- smiling

During the interview, the students will have to have to answer three questions.

Here are some example questions the employer can ask below. You may want to create a list of questions with your class:

- What can you tell me about yourself?

- Can you list your strengths?

- What weaknesses do you have?

- Why should I consider hiring you?

- Where do you see yourself five years from now?

Why do you want to work here?

The Cs will observe the interview. Afterwards, they will highlight something positive the student has done, and something they can improve on, in writing.

The As, Bs, and Cs will rotate until each student has had a go at each role.

After the activity, you can do a Q&A session to see what the students have learned. (Five – ten minutes)

This activity will allow students to gain valuable peer-to-peer feedback and an understanding of what to expect from an interview.

#### **4. Work experience diary**

##### **(Five – ten minutes)**

Introduce your students to the idea of recording their experiences during work experience. This will help them understand what they have learned or found useful during their placement. Find reflective activities for use in class with students after work experience.

**Activity:** Introduce your students to a handy work experience diary template\

##### **(Five – ten minutes)**

Print off enough copies of the work experience diary for your students, while showing them the diary on the whiteboard.

Ask them to fill out their name, school's name, date of placement, and employer they are going too.

Take them through the daily diary with the prompts. For example, give them ideas of the types of things they may learn in 'Something new I learned today...'.

Show them the five handy tips on the print-out. Pictures are a great way to record what they have learned. Remind them to always ask for permission to take pictures with their employer before they do so.