



# Connecting with Professionals

## A Planning Guide for Youth

A four-step process to help you investigate future career possibilities by meeting with professionals in the field! This guide begins with the assumption that the meeting has already been arranged.

### Grade range

This guide is designed for grades 6-12

### Why it matters

Meeting with professionals who work in the field you are interested in can inspire you and offer you practical guidance on how to successfully pursue the career of your choice. This guide will help you make the most of your time with these professionals and will be a resource you can take with you as you continue to strive for your goals.

### What to do

1. You or someone else has arranged for you to meet a professional in a specific field to learn about their career and their career pathway. This is an opportunity to learn from someone working in the field you might want to pursue. To help see if this career possibility might be a good fit for you, complete this form, called [Understanding Your Work Style and Interests](#) to learn more about your work style, strengths, and skills.
2. Next, use the [Interview Questions](#) page in this guide to prepare some questions you can ask this individual to learn more about their career and their career path. This will help you make the most of your time with them.
3. Now, have the meeting with the professional! Before, during, or after the experience, be sure to keep record of your experience using the top section of the [Records and Reflections](#) page of this guide.



4. Once you've met with this professional in the field, use the reflection section of the [Records and Reflections](#) page to help you to think through what you've learned and to prepare for possible next steps.
5. Write a thank you note or an email to the professional for their time and expertise. They took time to meet you, and it's not only polite to thank them, but you never know what other connections your meeting may lead to. Be sure to get help from your 4-H program leader, a teacher, or other trusted individual who can help you proof it before you send it. You can borrow some language here, but make it your own!

Dear {Name},

*My name is {NAME} and I met you when you visited my 4-H program. [Alternatively: I met you when I visited your place of work with my 4-H program].*

*I really enjoyed meeting you and learning about your career path. I found {\_\_\_\_\_} inspiring. My future goals are to {\_\_\_\_\_}. I would love to stay in touch as I pursue my goals.*

*Thank you for your time and expertise.*

*Sincerely,  
{Name}*

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## Interview Questions

Here are sample questions to ask the professional. Select 2-3 questions you would like to ask and/or add your own specific questions.

- What professional experiences did you have that led you to your current position?
- What educational experience did you have that led you to your current position?
- Are there certain things I should be doing right now that will help me learn skills to prepare me for my own career?
- What's one thing you wish someone had told you when you were my age?
- What is the most meaningful part of your job?
- Was there a time that you felt like you failed? How did you bounce back?
- Can you describe your career path? How did you set goals along the way?
- How can I connect with influential people in my industry or field as a young person?
- What is your job like on a daily basis?
- What is something that inspired you about this career/current position?
- Other:

# Records and Reflections

## Records

What is the name of the professional you are meeting?

Write down any contact information you have for this professional.

What is this person's occupation and at what company/organization?

When (date and time) and where is the meeting?

## Reflections

What new skills or knowledge did you gain from this interaction with a professional in the field?

[Write work style here] \_\_\_\_\_

Based on what you've learned, how does this career path fit with your preferred work style?

You previously stated that others describe you as \_\_\_\_\_

How do these qualities about yourself fit with this career/company/organization?

What are some questions you still have about this career path?

How can what you learned from this professional be applied to what you are learning in 4-H?

What can you do in the next 6 months to get yourself on a pathway to a career like this?