

When considering a career, it is helpful to talk with a person who is already established in his/her career. Most people are glad to talk with you about their job and what they do on a daily basis.

Steps to set up a meeting

Identify a career you want to learn more about.

Identify a person who has a career you are considering. This might be a teacher, hair stylist, medical assistant, policeman, or soccer coach. You may or may not know this person.

Set up a time to meet.

You can request a time to meet by visiting the person's office or by calling or emailing them. You can say "I am thinking of a career in [chosen field] and would like to meet with you at your convenience to learn more about your job and what you do."

During the meeting

Bring a notepad.

List questions to ask before your meeting that you can refer to easily. Thank them for their time and explain why you are interested in talking with them. It is good to take some notes during your meeting.

Questions you can ask:

- Why were you interested in your career? Did you know anyone else who worked in this career?
- How much education is required for this career? Where did you go to prepare for this career? How much debt did you have when you graduated? What might you have done differently?
- What is a normal day like for you?
- What are the most rewarding aspects of your career? What are some of the challenges?
- What volunteer or work experiences might help me decide if this is the right career for me?
- What can I do to learn more about this career? Do you know anyone else I can talk with to learn more?
- Would it be possible for me to shadow or volunteer with you for a few hours in the future?

Before you leave, thank them for their time and tell them how helpful it was to talk with them.

Follow-up

Thank them again!

Send a handwritten thank-you note telling them how valuable their advice was to you.

Keep in touch.

Consider sending an email every six months or so to let them know how your career plans are progressing. This can be helpful if you plan on asking them for a letter of recommendation in the future.