

## So you've agreed to talk with students. Now what?

*Even CEOs can get nervous talking to a roomful of teenagers.*

*Here are some **speaker tips** for connecting with high school students.*

### **Be yourself.**

Students appreciate adults who will talk to them like adults.

Don't worry about impressing them. Just be yourself and speak your truth.

### **Describe your job.**

Don't assume that students know what an architect, engineer, radiologist or carpenter does.

Explain your responsibilities and projects. Highlight the best and worst parts. Be colorful.

### **Share your own education and career path.**

Students often think they will choose a job and then do that job forever, which makes them anxious. It is reassuring and interesting for them to hear that 1) you didn't have it all figured out in high school and 2) your career path has had twists and turns along the way.

### **Explain what it REALLY takes to succeed at work.**

Do talk about the specific skills you need for your job. But also talk about the more universal skills needed to be successful in your workplace, such as teamwork, showing up on time, taking initiative, good communication, creative problem-solving, ethics, etc.

### **Talk to the whole room.**

Some students may seem attentive and others may appear disengaged. This is normal! Keep looking for opportunities to connect. Students are always listening, even if they aren't making eye contact.

### **Be concise.**

It's always better to talk for 5-10 minutes and then leave plenty of time for questions than to spend the whole time talking "at" students. Just save some material and anecdotes in reserve.

### **Expect the expected -- and while you're at it, have fun!**

Our experience at PWA tells us that students are hungry for career advice and pleased to have adults pay attention to them, tell them about opportunities and share some illuminating, informative anecdotes about the "real world."

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