

Informational Interview Preparation + Questions to Ask

Use the below worksheet as a guide to help you prepare for a casual conversation or “informational interview.” The purpose of an informational interview is to test out if a career path, occupation, or organization is a good fit for you and aligned with who you are. This document helps you to gather information so that you can make an informed decision about career paths of interest.

Example script for reaching out for an informational interview:

Introduction: Hi [INSERT THEIR NAME], I’m [INSERT YOUR NAME]

Provide Context: I’m an _____ a student at Palm Beach Atlantic University and am interested in learning more about [OCCUPATION NAME, ORGANIZATION NAME]. Currently I am majoring in [MAJOR] and took a career assessment that indicated I might be a good fit as a [OCCUPATION NAME].

Provide more context/genuine compliment: I’m researching various careers of interest and I found you while researching potential [COMPANIES/ROLES]. I’m really intrigued by the work you do!

The “Ask”: I’m wondering if you would be willing to chat for 30 minutes sometime in the next couple of weeks? I’d like to ask you a few questions about [OCCUPATION / COMPANY NAME]. I’m still trying to narrow down my options for a career and it would be a lot of help to learn more from your perspective.

Question Bank -- for you to ask:

Only ask questions you are genuinely interested in learning the answers to. People can tell if you are just having the conversation to try and get a job or internship. Be sincere, and always follow up with a handwritten thank you note if possible. If not, send a genuine thank you email.

- How did you decide to pursue this occupation?
- Why did you decide to become a [occupation name]?
- What did you study as an undergraduate?
- What majors do individuals in this field typically pursue?
- What are your favorite parts about being a [occupation name]?
- What are your least favorite parts about being a [occupation name]?
- How do you become a [occupation name]? What are the various paths to become a [occupation name]?
- What’s your favorite part about working at [company name/industry]?
- What’s your least favorite part about working at [company name/industry]?
- What gets you most excited about being a [occupation name]?

- Have you been a [occupation name] in other sectors or industries? What was it like?
- Why did you choose this company or position over others in your field?
- What didn't you know before you got into this industry that you wish someone had told you?
- What gets you most excited about the [occupational field name] future?
- What can you tell me about the job growth for [occupation name]?
- What are the biggest challenges facing [occupation name]?
- What's a typical career path look like for [occupation name]?
- What kind of skills or knowledge does a/an [occupation name] need?
- What are commonalities among the people that thrive best as [occupation name]?
- What advice do you have for me if I were to choose this career path?
- Based on what you know about my background, what weaknesses do you see?

Additional Considerations:

- Keep your introduction brief. Don't waste the person's time talking about yourself, they've offered their time to help you, and your goal is to collect information from them in order for you to decide about your major/career options.
- If applicable, remind them how you are connected when you greet them, whether via a mutual friend or your alma mater.
- Consider mentioning early on in the conversation that you are hoping to chat with 10-15 other professionals in the industry/line of work. That will give them time to think of who else they may be able to connect you with while you talk. If you wait until the end of the meeting, they may draw a blank.
- **Send a thank you note! By email, and a handwritten one for bonus points.**