JA Inspire® Entry

■ Work and Career Readiness

JA Inspire is much more than a career fair. It brings together the business community and local schools and is designed to help launch middle school students into their future—high school, postsecondary education, and careers beyond. The curriculum can be completed by students independently at home, or in a classroom with or without teacher involvement. The *JA Inspire* event, which follows the curriculum, can be in-person, virtual, or both.

The learning experience consists of three segments: (1) pre-event career-oriented sessions; (2) the *JA Inspire* event; and (3) a post-event reflection. The *JA Inspire* event is aligned with local industry and career opportunities, as well as JA Area and local school district preferences.

JA Inspire in-person events are multi-hour experiences where students participate in hands-on activities, often using equipment or tools used on a job. VFairs, the online interactive platform used to host *JA Inspire* virtual events, allows students to attend webinars and presentations, explore company exhibits, and interact with career speakers. Both event types provide students a powerful way to learn about real-world career opportunities and their local economy.

This learning experience is part of the JA Work and Career Readiness Pathway and is designed for grades 6–8. The default instructional contact hours for this learning experience is 4 hours, with a variable ICH of 5–7 hours.

LEARNING EXPERIENCE HIGHLIGHTS

- Multiple curriculum implementation options: fully teacher-led, fully self-guided, or hybrid with classroom introductions and talking points for all self-guided sessions.

- Allows students to explore their own values, skills, and interests, plus career clusters and the specific jobs that align with them.

- Requires a digital device for each participating student.

- Event (virtual, in-person, or both) provides a powerful way to learn about real-world careers.

- Provides many extension activities via JA Connect (connect.ja.org/work-career-readiness)

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VFAIRS PLATFORM DETAILS (VIRTUAL EVENT ONLY)

- Is accessible from any device.
- No downloads are required.
- Visually rich virtual environment mimics the dynamics of a physical live event, including a virtual lobby, information desk, auditorium for presentations, and halls with sponsoring company booths.
- Students can revisit the virtual *JA Inspire* event multiple times.
- Materials can be saved to a virtual backpack and emailed to students or to parents post event.

CURRICULUM OUTLINE

Session	Overview	Objectives	Activities
Session One: Career Interests and Your Path	Students understand the importance of career planning and complete a Career Interest Inventory to assess their own values, skills, and interests in the context of career paths.	**Students will:** • Consider their values, skills, and interests. • Take a Career Interest Inventory. • Relate their values, skills, interests, and Career Interest Inventory to future career opportunities.	**Required:** • Developing a Career Plan • Career Interest Inventory **Recommended:** • How to Develop a Growth Mindset
Session Two: Career Planning and Your Path	Using JA Here to Career at https://career.ja.org students learn to recognize career clusters and focus on those tied to the results of their Career Interest Inventory. They explore the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for their careers of interest, as well as the outlook for openings in those fields.	**Students will:** • Learn why career planning is important. • Recognize career clusters. • Identify career clusters that match their skills and interests. • Identify requirements to obtain jobs in fields of interest.	**Required:** • Why Is Career Planning Important? • Career Clusters **Recommended:** • JA Here to Career educational and career readiness resources
Session Three: Preparing to Meet Your Future	Students learn how awareness of their values, skills, and interests helps guide them to a career that is meaningful, enjoyable, and positioned for success. They learn about soft skills and explore education and training requirements in their fields of interest.	**Students will:** • Understand why it's important to choose a career where they can be successful and develop a career plan. • Practice soft skills. • Recognize education and training requirements and opportunities for careers of interest.	**Required:** • Preparing to Meet Your Future • Soft Skills • Education **Recommended:** • JA Connect Work with Others activities

(continued)

Junior Achievement™

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CURRICULUM OUTLINE

Session	Overview	Objectives	Activities
Session Four: Local Business Means Opportunity	Students learn about their local economy. They review the list of *JA Inspire* exhibitors and the website of their local Chamber of Commerce and look for common themes, such as career clusters. They identify companies they would like to visit during the *JA Inspire* event.	**Students will:** • Recognize traits of their local economy. • Identify common career clusters in their area and among *JA Inspire* exhibitors. • Create a list of exhibitors to visit during the *JA Inspire* event.	**Required:** • Research Your Local Economy • Exhibitor Booths to Visit **Recommended:** • What Is the Gig Economy? • Gigs Are Everywhere
Session Five (Virtual Event): Learn from the Experts Note: This session is used if students are attending a virtual *JA Inspire* event.	Students review the speakers and webinars available at the *JA Inspire* virtual event, create a list of at least three to view, and define what they would like to learn from them.	**Students will:** • Identify relevant speakers and webinars to attend. • Note facts about the speakers and topics of webinars they will attend. • Develop questions to consider when watching the speakers and webinars.	**Required:** • Speakers and Webinars to View • Learn from the Experts
Session Five (In-Person Event): Prepare for the JA Inspire Event Note: This session is used if students are attending an in-person *JA Inspire* event.	Students prepare for the in-person *JA Inspire* event by reviewing logistics of the event day and getting ready to make a good impression when interacting with company representatives.	**Students will**: • Learn the logistics of attending the in-person event. • Learn the importance of networking and create an elevator pitch. • Prepare questions to ask exhibitors and practice asking them. • Review the JA Code of Conduct.	**Required** • Creating an Elevator Pitch • Preparing Questions • JA Code of Conduct • Personal Interactions
Session Six: Visit the JA Inspire Event	Students attend the *JA Inspire* event. This may be a virtual event on the vFairs platform, an in-person event, or both.	**Students will:** • Visit exhibits at the *JA Inspire* event. • Attend speeches and webinars (virtual event). • Ask career-oriented questions of local businesspeople (in-person event)	**Required:** • Explore the *JA Inspire* in-person and/or virtual event
Session Seven: JA Inspire Personal Reflection	Students reflect on what they have learned and identify next steps to further define their academic choices and career path.	**Students will:** • Evaluate personal goals and priorities based on their experiences in the *JA Inspire* learning experience. • Identify next steps, including exploration of high school coursework and other research.	**Required:** • Reflection and Next Steps • Personal Reflection **Recommended:** • JA Connect career planning activities