

Classroom Tips GRADES 9-12 (High School)

Thank you for volunteering your time and experience with JA students. The following information might help you prepare to speak to students in grades 9-12. These students usually range from ages 14-18.

General Student Profile

- For these students, life after high school is just around the corner and they are very curious about **what life will be like** after graduation. Recall what you were thinking and feeling at this age and consider how it influenced your career path.
 - Students may ask personal questions about your job, family, or salary. Consider in advance what you are comfortable sharing and what you will politely decline to share.
 - Students will want to know about you. Talk about your early aspirations, your current job, and how you were hired.
- There is a significant **range in maturity** from ninth graders, who are transitioning into their teenage years, and twelfth graders, who may already have a driver's license, jobs, and other adult experiences.
 - Students can grasp abstract concepts; but they may hold strong opinions based on family and friend input.
 - They think of themselves as adults. They expect to be taken seriously and treated with authenticity. Don't talk down to them or try to be one of them.
 - Ask them questions about their experience or previous knowledge on the topic to help them connect to the topic and feel included. Don't assume they have knowledge about your topic. Ask questions to establish what they already know.
- **Conformity** is essential for students at this age; they can be critical of themselves and others.
 - They may appear to be reserved or disengaged, but they really want to have fun and explore new topics and information. Hang in there; be authentic, and they will warm up to you.
 - Be prepared to **wait after asking a question** for someone to respond.
 - Provide positive feedback to encourage others to contribute as well.
 - Be confident, show strength, and be decisive, but friendly.
- A rule of thumb for **attention span** is one minute for each year of age. So plan to chunk your presentation into 10- to 15-minute segments in which you allow students to shift their attention to something different in between.
 - For example, as you tell them stories about your experience, stop after 10 minutes or so and ask them questions, show a brief video, or have them tell the person next to them one thing they remember from your last topic.

Try to avoid:

- being students' friend
- criticizing
- speaking in a monotone
- sowing nervousness

- Avoid directly lecturing to students for more than 3-5 minutes. Use stories and lots of examples intermixed with questions for discussion.

Planning Suggestions

 Organize

- Review the program material and consider how to share your experiences that best support the desired learning.
- Come up with a list of stories about yourself that you can share.
- Start with a goal: What do you want students to remember later? Why is your story important? What are the “key takeaway” points?
- Keep it simple. Avoid jargon.
- Plan for small chunks of lecture with questions and visuals to keep their attention.
- Prepare props, visual aids, and student instructions.

 Connect

- Be honest and respectful, and be yourself.
- Share things about yourself. Prepare a 60-second overview about your life to start off.
- Ask students to share what they already know about your company or your speaking topic.
- Respect students' backgrounds, heritage, and culture. Be aware of activities or questions that could make students uncomfortable or ashamed.
- Be positive; offer affirmations (thank students for participating, answering questions, etc.)
- Maintain eye contact.
- Show your passion.

 Check In

- Make sure students understand an idea before moving to the next one.
- Ask compelling and open-ended questions.
- Allow time for students to process questions before answering.
- Listen to what students say.
- Choose a place to stop and have the students predict what they think happened before sharing the end of the story.

 Reflect

- Leave time at the end of your presentation to summarize your top 1-3 items you want students to remember.
- Offer possible resources where they may go to learn more.
- Ask for volunteers to state a fact or concept they will remember.
- Ask for any questions they may have.