Volunteer training guide
TRAINING AGENDA

WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT—HOW we teach

REVIEW JA MATERIALS—WHAT we teach

PROGRAM SPECIFICS

CLOSING & EVALUATION

TRAINING OBJECTIVES

VOLUNTEERS WILL UNDERSTAND:
- The educational goals of Junior Achievement’s programs
- How to prepare for their JA program

VOLUNTEERS WILL KNOW:
- Basic techniques to engage students in learning
- How to “take ownership” of Junior Achievement kits and how to plan lessons

VOLUNTEERS WILL BE ABLE TO:
- Make connections with students between your work experience and the Junior Achievement curriculum
- Independently prepare for success as Junior Achievement volunteers
Junior Achievement is the world’s largest organization dedicated to educating students in grades K-12 about entrepreneurship, work readiness, and financial literacy through experiential, hands-on programs.

Junior Achievement’s mission is to inspire and prepare young people to succeed in a global economy.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

- Teachers or schools request programs from Junior Achievement, and Junior Achievement recruits and trains volunteers to fulfill the requests.
- Junior Achievement programs are free to teachers.
- Programs are developed by Junior Achievement’s national office.
- Junior Achievement provides all materials and training.
- Each program contains 5-8 sessions.
- Teachers remain in the classroom at all times during the volunteer’s sessions.

TYPE OF PROGRAMS?

Classroom Programs
A volunteer is assigned to a classroom. The volunteer and teacher determine a schedule for the volunteer to come into the classroom once a week over the course of several weeks and teach the program to the class.

JA in a Day
Fifty to sixty volunteers present all 5 program sessions to every K-5th grader in a single day instead of over five weeks. Junior Achievement suggests two volunteers per class. The program generally takes 5-6 hours and is a great team-building, service activity.

JA Finance Park
The JA Finance Park program includes teacher-led, personal finance curriculum and a visit to JA Finance Park. There, students are given a new adult identity and work in small groups with volunteers to budget, shop, and pay their bills.

Specialty Programs
Learning objectives are statements that describe what students should know or be able to know by the time a session is completed. Each session in the JA curriculum includes unique learning objectives.

The objectives should be thought of as goals used as a guide throughout each session. Creating connections to specific goals allows students to relate their learning and increases their understanding of the material. Also, referring your teaching back to the objectives reinforces the students’ learning.

Learning GOALS

Clearly state the session objectives before beginning each activity.
- Post the objectives on the board and explain their meaning.

Be sure to refer the students to the learning objectives when teaching a concept or conducting an activity.
- "See how during this activity we are analyzing products and services that can be offered. This was one of the objectives for this session."

Ask students how they think a task or idea relates to a learning objective.
- This can be a whole group or small group activity.

Only 9% of teens report that they are currently saving money for college.
Statistics obtained from The Allstate Foundation and Junior Achievement.
EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

When volunteering for JA, it is important to note that a teacher will be in the classroom to help manage the behavior of students.

Effective classroom management can have an enormous impact on the level of achievement of your students. While the teacher will be primarily responsible for managing students’ behavior, there are several things you as volunteers can do to ensure you have a positive experience.

State the directions of an activity before breaking the students into groups.
- “Before we can start the activity we need to make sure everyone fully understands what is going to take place.”

Use proximity and movement.
- Move around the room to engage each student equally.
- Place yourself near off-task students to minimize disruptions.

Utilize existing attention signals used by the teacher.
- Ask the teacher what strategies she/he uses to quiet their classroom.
  - Ex: Teacher: “1, 2, 3, all eyes on me”
  ...Student: “1, 2 eyes on you!”
- Raise your hand silently until all students do the same.

Set Clear Expectations.
- “Throughout each session, it is important that each student is paying full attention because there is going to be a lot of new information given to you.”

Press reset.
- If you unable to teach the lesson because of behavior issues, stop the lesson and take a moment to regroup before restarting.

TIPS:
- Print when writing on the board.
- Give instructions three steps at a time. You can even write the steps down on the board.
With each lesson being 45-60 minutes in length, it is important to keep a high level of engagement with your students. When students become disengaged with you as an instructor, it becomes much more difficult to connect with the material.

Increasing and maintaining student engagement can be accomplished by using various tools and techniques. Some of these tools and techniques are listed below.

**STUDENT ENGAGEMENT**

Be personal Students are more responsive to authority figures that they have made personal connections with.
- Introduce yourself and describe your job.
- Provide 1-2 facts about yourself... where are you from? Do you have any pets?

Ask open-ended questions to promote deeper understanding of the material. Be sure to give adequate time for students to process the question.
- “Why is it important to know the city zone a particular business belongs to?”

Allow for students to share with one another (pair sharing). Walk around the group to ensure students are on task.
- “Turn and talk with your neighbor about...”

Give ample time for reflection. This can be in the form of pair sharing or individual thinking.

Minimize the amount of direct instruction (lecturing). Use the tips and suggestions in your guidebook to engage the students in whole group or small group discussions.

**TIP:**

Be enthusiastic and friendly. Your attitude is contagious!
Feedback is essential. It should be used to clarify material, reinforce expectations, and support students as they participate in the lesson. Providing feedback means giving students an explanation of what they are doing correctly AND incorrectly. However, the focus of the feedback should be based essentially on what the students is doing right. Giving your students an affirmation or asking them to explain their answer, even if it is wrong, is very important. By simply telling a student “no” or “yes” or even a giving them a “good job,” a student will not understand the true depth of what they have done correctly or incorrectly. Being deliberate in your feedback is vital to becoming an effective instructor.

Positive reinforcement.
- Make sure students know when they are acting appropriately.
- “The way Jaquan raised his hand and waited to be called on was very respectful.”

Positive correction – if students give a wrong answer, it is important to clarify but in a positive way.
- Ask the student to expand on their answer (maybe they have just not expressed themselves fully)
- Use the sandwich method – compliment, correct, compliment.

Be prompt.
- Acknowledge a student’s behavior quickly so they do not feel like their actions are unnoticed.

Be specific.
- Be sure to explain what it is a student is doing well.
- “I like the way Sally’s table is sitting quietly, ready for the next activity.”

Be authentic.
- Be truthful with students about what you actually observe; false flattery will not help your credibility.
- “In this group, I hear Adrienne and Shane sharing a lot of interesting ideas, and I am wondering what Mike and Gabe are thinking about, since the two of you have been so quiet.”

TIP: Make certificate distribution special. Call students up by name and give a lesson in the proper handshake while handing them their certificates.
SUPPORTING DIVERSE LEARNERS

When volunteering with JA, you are not going to know the background of each student. It is likely that you will be working with students from differing culturally and linguistically backgrounds.

In addition, almost 5% of all students in our nation’s public schools are classified as having specific learning disabilities. The term *learning disability* is an umbrella term that encompasses a variety of different disorders related to a student’s learning. There may be students with different learning disabilities in your classroom, but there are techniques and strategies that will help you promote learning in each of your students.

It will be helpful, however, to ask the teacher ahead of time to give you an overview of the students in your class and if there are any particular situations you should be aware of.

Be flexible:
- Your goal is student learning. The lesson plan may need to be modified in order to adapt to the needs of the group.

Be sure to speak clearly and slowly:
- Use slower and more deliberate language to help increase student learning.
- Repeating instructions more than once will help make sure all students are on the same page.
- Review vocabulary terms often.

Diversify instruction:
- Use kinesthetic learning (movement) when possible.
- Utilize small group discussions.
- Encourage turn-and-talk (paired sharing).

Demonstrate respect:
- Model and expect students to actively listen to one another and seek to understand peers’ thinking and needs.

Use visual aids to help English Language Learners with the material:
- Refer to materials or other manipulatives that are being used in a lesson.

Create a purposeful learning experience:
- Consider students’ language and academic backgrounds, and find ways to connect the content with learners’ background knowledge, interests and language.
When asked if being a JA student positively affected their future, 92% of JA alumni responded with a resounding “Yes!”

Statistics obtained from Junior Achievement USA’s evaluation, Junior Achievement Creates Alumni Success
Kindergarten (5 year olds)
Children begin to combine simple ideas into more complex relations. As a result, they need an environment rich in printed materials that stimulates the development of language and literacy skills. They also need a variety of direct experiences to develop cognitively, physically, emotionally and socially.

First Grade (6 year olds)
These children are active learners and demonstrate considerable verbal skills. They are interested in games and rules and develop concepts and problem-solving skills from these experiences. Hands-on activity and experimentation are important.

Second Grade (7 year olds)
As seasoned veterans of two years of schooling, these children are increasingly able to reason, listen to others and show social give-and-take. They can display flexibility, open-mindedness and tolerance of unfamiliar ideas to a remarkable extent.

Kindergarten, First, and Second graders are very active and don’t sit still for long; they enjoy moving around the classroom. They are very talkative and their attention span is short. These students are very curious and they tend to get excited and love to learn. Most students are very honest at this age and they love to play.

Third Grade (8 year olds)
These children combine great curiosity with increased social interest. They are able to learn about people who live elsewhere in the world, but their understanding of what they read is dependent upon relating ideas to their own experience.

Fourth Grade (9 year olds)
These children are somewhat self-conscious and prefer group activities to working alone. They are also beginning to understand abstractions as well as cause-and-effect relationships, but need real experience in social settings.

Fifth Grade (10 year olds)
These youngsters may be experiencing bodily changes and rapid growth spurts, which cause periods of frustration and anger. They generally are interested in and enthusiastic about places and problems in the news and want to know who and what caused these problems, and where they occurred.

Third, Fourth, and Fifth graders can be very competitive and tend to get noisy and excited. They value fair play and expect adults to adhere to rules. Many students are peer-conscious and may be very concerned about what classmates think. They like participating in group activities. They are often inquisitive and need to express their opinions. Boys and girls begin to discover one another and begin to interact.
**Student Characteristics**

**Middle School**

Never underestimate this age group. They want to learn almost everything, and they are developing the ability to think abstractly. More important, they need to feel cared about and respected by the adults in their lives. Developing comfortable and secure relationships with the students is a high priority.

**Sixth Grade-11 year olds**

They are in a period of transition between childhood and adolescence. As a result they tend to be sociable and need opportunities to express feelings and opinions. They have an increased ability to de-center and see the world from various perspectives. Students prefer new tasks and experiences to reflection or revision of previous work.

**Seventh Grade-12 year olds**

Students often take a tentative approach to difficult intellectual tasks as they are not willing to take big risks. They like to challenge authority and give one word answers to adult questions. They worry about school work. They can and will see both sides of an argument and have a high interest in current events, politics, social justice as well as pop culture.

**Eighth Grade-13 year olds**

Students want to be treated like adults, but don’t expect adult behavior consistently. Asking the students to help develop the rules for your sessions can increase their involvement and positively impact their behavior. They are very aware of problems in the larger world and interested in technology and how things work.

**Middle School students** are often dealing with adult issues. Remember that despite their age and maturity levels, their feelings and beliefs are very important to them. Always treat them with the respect you expect them to show you.

They have a desire to be seen as competent and to be recognized for what they do well. They value order, consistency, and fair play. Make sure you are always clear and consistent when discussing and enforcing rules.

Conformity with peers is critical and it may seem they are “too cool to care”. If, however, you are consistent, friendly and caring, they will become more open and animated.

The attention span of a middle school student is about 8-10 minutes.

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92% of JA alumni indicate they can compete successfully in the business environment, and 95% say they can effectively handle a job interview.

Statistics obtained from Junior Achievement USA’s evaluation, *Junior Achievement Creates Alumni Success*
High school students’ attitudes may initially feel distant to volunteers. Volunteers may initially feel a distant (I’m too cool to do this class) attitude from the students. It is important to understand why students may act this way so that you can effectively develop relationships with the students you will be working with.

These students are at the stage where they are not yet adults, but they think of themselves as such as want you to treat them that way. They are feeling the pressure of making major decisions about their future. Their curriculum is much more challenging, and they have less time to achieve the skills and lessons needed to get their diploma. They tend to dream and often go without much sleep. They want honesty and need to establish their identity.

This age group is usually knowledgeable. Adults find their questions challenging and are usually pleasantly surprised by their maturity.

These students need to be taken seriously. They will value your sincere interest in their lives and their futures, especially if that sincerity is backed by relevant and engaging examples from your own life.

Many students still react to peer-pressure. Students are also seeking to express their own individuality. All behavior has a social purpose and it is usually to get attention. Never personalize student negative behavior and remain positive.

Many high school students struggle with the desire for the privileges of adulthood. At the same time, many students this age are already dealing with adult-level responsibilities, such as working and managing finances. Many of these youth do not trust because of negative life experience, you need to build and earn their trust.

Though they may dress and act very mature, remember that they are still young. Don’t be intimidated – be yourself! They will warm up to you; it may just take a little longer.

One of the keys to working with teenagers is to engage in casual conversations. This is the key to developing relationships and connection with students.

“Economic education is about much more than money. It provides students with a framework for making good decisions that will help them and the country.”

- Alan B. Krueger, former Chairman of the Council of Economics Advisors
Before your program begins...

Traditional Classroom Programs:

Contact your teacher to discuss:

- Scheduling / Parking / Front office check-in (bring your I.D.)
- Classroom rules and specifics: Student characteristics/special circumstances, Activities the students enjoy most, their general abilities, and suggestions for classroom management
- Food allergies and treat recommendations/ restrictions for final visit
- Substitute teacher policy
- Emergency contact information (home phone numbers/emails)
- Roster of students' first names
- The importance of the teacher remaining in the classroom at all times

Schedule a preliminary visit to the classroom.

Note the following during this preliminary visit:

- How many students are there? Knowing this will help you decide how to separate the class into groups or pairs.
- How does the teacher encourage orderly participation? For example, do students raise their hands?
- How does the teacher handle interruptions?
- What does the teacher do to make each student feel important and at ease?
- Where can you display posters and visuals? Will you need tape for displays? Does the teacher prefer that you display posters and other visuals in a specific place?
- How is the room arranged? Will you need to move desks or chairs for any part of your presentation?
- How can you engage the teacher in your presentation?
- Do you see any potential problems with managing the class?

Provide the teacher with his/her materials if necessary.

No two classrooms are alike, and no single session will meet the needs of all the students. With the teacher's guidance, adapt sessions as necessary, while staying focused on the stated objectives. You can greatly enrich your time in the classroom by drawing on your own experiences. Develop examples that are relevant to each session. The most striking aspect of the class will be the variation in the students' abilities, maturity levels, and interests. You will discover that students have unique social, personal, and academic needs. Connect the sessions to the students' current and future needs; personalize everything.
BEFORE YOUR PROGRAM BEGINS...

JA in a Day Programs:

Contact your teacher to discuss:

- Classroom rules and specifics: Student characteristics/special circumstances, Activities the students enjoy most, their general abilities, and suggestions for classroom management
- Food allergies and treat recommendations/restrictions (if you choose to bring treats)
- Substitute teacher policy
- Emergency contact information (home phone numbers/emails)
- Roster of students’ first names
- The importance of the teacher remaining in the classroom at all times
- Be prepared to wait through lunch and recess in order to complete your lessons

All Programs:

The following steps may help you efficiently plan your presentation time.

- Batch materials by session
- Review the overview, objectives, concepts, and skills
- Review the preparation and presentation plans and the activity instructions
- Become familiar with the Key Terms defined in the margins
- Review the Teaching Tips
- Check the materials list to be sure you have sufficient time to gather any necessary items that may not be included in the kit
- Prepare name tents for elementary students
- Plan thoroughly, but know that you can modify your presentation. The session may take more or less time than recommended, depending on your teaching style and students’ interests and abilities.

Tip:

Training Videos are a great way to review each session’s content before going into the classroom. Choose the videos on our website under VOLUNTEER RESOURCES that correlate with your JA program to watch these brief lesson overviews.
Working with Students:

- Leave student discipline to the teacher.
- Arrive early, but don’t interrupt if the class is in session.
- Wear what you normally wear to work
- Greet the students in a friendly, yet professional manner.
- Smile, shake hands (if appropriate), and maintain eye contact.
- Give your name, and ask each student for his or her name. Use the Table Tents provided to help you learn the students’ names.
- Be yourself. Talk about your early aspirations, your current job, and how you got it.
- Determine what the students already know about a concept or topic. What knowledge and experiences do they bring to the class?

Teaching Strategies/Classroom Management:

- Limit lectures to no more than 5 to 10 minutes; lecture usually is the least effective of all teaching strategies.
- Define or review the main points and/or key terms on the board
- When particular skills are required, such as mathematical calculations, provide an example or demonstration of the process before asking the students to solve a problem.
- Frequently check for understanding by asking relevant questions.
- **Share the following expectations.**
  - Students in each group must work together at all times.
  - Everyone participates and shares her or his knowledge.
  - Everyone listens with respect.
- **Assign roles in a group.** It often is effective to ask the students to number off, beginning with one, and to remember their numbers. Use the count to assign roles. After an activity, call on a student by number to report on the group’s experience.
  - Save time by using the same groups for each session.
  - Ask the teacher to assist in assigning group work.
  - Circulate among small groups to answer questions and help keep the students on task.
  - Encourage the students to help one another.
- **Distinguish between active learning and genuine engagement and disruptive/inattentive behavior.** A quiet class isn’t necessarily good, nor is a talkative class necessarily bad. Rigorous discussions or active simulations often are noisy indicators that the students are learning.
For further information and support, visit our online Resource Center available at the JA website: www.JAtoday.org.
Resources include Volunteer FAQs, Training Videos by Grade, Teaching Tips and more.

Supplemental training videos are available at:
https://www.juniorachievement.org/web/ja-usa/training-videos

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