



## **Volunteering with Junior Achievement of Central Illinois**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **What is Junior Achievement?**

Junior Achievement (JA) is a nonprofit organization whose purpose is to inspire young people to succeed in a global economy. JA reaches students in grades K-12 at participating schools and organizations. Programs are delivered by volunteers. JA programs consist of fun, hands-on activities that help students develop the skills they need to experience the realities and opportunities of work and entrepreneurship in the 21st-century global economy. All programs align with national and state learning standards.

#### **Why volunteer for Junior Achievement?**

At Junior Achievement, we believe that communities are built when people volunteer. That is why our volunteers are such an integral part of everything we do; without them, we would not exist. When you volunteer for JA, you're not just a volunteer; you are a valued and trusted partner in the future of our community. Volunteering for JA can also be a way to help build the future talent pipeline for your company and/or your career field.

#### **Who can volunteer?**

Volunteers are typically business professionals, college students, community members, and/or parents who want to play an active part in participating in the education of students around them and in helping them prepare for the future.

#### **What do I get from the experience of volunteering in the classroom?**

- Experience those "magic moments," when you see a child understand something new
- Sharpen your presentation and coaching skills
- Connect with your community and learn about the challenges and successes local schools face
- Challenge yourself to try something new
- Increase awareness of your company & profession
- Help build the future talent pipeline for your career and your company

#### **How much time will it take?**

Volunteering for JA typically consists of 5-7 in class visits of less than an hour each. The program length and duration varies by grade level.

#### **Do I have to provide my own materials?**

No, we provide all the materials that you will need. Our materials are easy to use, and include a detailed Volunteer and Teacher Guide complete with program goals, objectives, and step by step instructions for each in class session.

#### **Can I still volunteer if my schedule is always changing?**

We have many volunteers that schedule their JA sessions around their busy schedules. You will be able to work directly with your teacher to schedule the JA sessions. Team teaching is also an excellent option for volunteers who travel occasionally or are otherwise uncertain of their availability each week. You can find a colleague or friend to team teach with you. We encourage both volunteers to attend all JA sessions when possible.

Volunteers will receive only one JA program kit (for kit based programs) or one JA print kit (for blended programs). Volunteers who are working in a team teaching scenario should communicate and work together during the preparation process to share the materials.

#### **Do I need to attend training?**

Training is required for all new volunteers. Our new volunteer training provides you with information regarding what to expect and how to prepare for a successful teaching experience. If you cannot attend your company scheduled training, contact your JA program staff to make alternate arrangements.

**How long will it take me to prepare for each session?**

For your first JA session, we recommend allowing about 45 minutes to prepare. This is most likely more time than you need, but each program is different and requires different preparation. As you become familiar with the program format and activities, it may take you less time to prepare for each class.

**Can I teach at a school close to my home or work?**

Our program team works to meet your needs. We do our best to place volunteers in a close proximity to your home or work, as desired.

**Can I teach in my child's classroom?**

If your child's school participates in JA, our policy typically is that the previous year's volunteer gets first choice to return to that class. Sometimes volunteers are willing to move around. Please let the program staff know which class you would like to teach, and we will let you know if that class is available. We also work on a first come first serve basis, so the earlier you can let us know which class you would like to teach, the better.

**How do I contact my teacher?**

JA staff will provide the name and contact information for your teacher. You are responsible for contacting your teacher to set up the schedule for the JA sessions. At some schools, we hold a JA kickoff meeting at the school, either before or after school. If you and the teacher can both attend, that is a great opportunity to meet your teacher and schedule the JA sessions. You will also be able to pick up your JA kit of materials at the JA kickoff meeting if you are volunteering for a kit based program. Blended program access will be provided through email instructions, and a blended program print kit will also be provided (one per class/program).

**What should I wear?**

We suggest you wear Business Casual attire or clothing that represents your profession. We recommend comfortable shoes and dressing in layers as classroom temperatures may vary.

**What assistance can I expect in the classroom?**

Your teacher is required to be present with you in the classroom at all times during JA sessions. The school may have other helping adults rotating throughout the classrooms, such as Para Educators and Specialists. The teacher is responsible for maintaining order and discipline in the classroom. Let your teacher know what kind of assistance would be most useful to you.

**What should I do if the teacher is absent?**

When you talk with your teacher before your first JA session, you should discuss how to deal with absences. You may continue JA as usual or plan to reschedule in the event of a substitute teacher. You may want to check in with your teacher a couple days before your visit to confirm. If you arrive and there is a substitute, quickly give them an overview of the JA program, what your lesson for the day will cover, and what you will require of them. Remind the substitute that they are to stay in the classroom during JA sessions.

**What if I have emailed the teacher and still have not heard back from them?**

We recommend e-mailing the teacher a second time as well as leaving a message at the school for the teacher. We have found that e-mail is not always reliable as your message may go straight to a junk folder or get caught up in spam, even if it has not done so before. If you have tried to make several contacts with the teacher and do not receive a response within about five days, please contact JA Program Staff immediately, and we will help make contact with the teacher.

**What should I do with the remaining program materials after the class is complete?**

The teacher is welcome to keep any of the extra materials. If the teacher does not want them, please leave them at the school's front office. JA Program Staff will pick them up once all the programs have completed there. You can also drop off extra materials directly to the JA office (508 High Point Lane, East Peoria, 61611). Please be sure to let someone know if you plan to stop by the office so we can ensure that someone will be here. We will recycle any unused materials to make new kits.

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