

CAREER FAIR TIPS

This Quick-Start Guide to Career Fairs introduces and explores the vital role that career fairs play in shaping the futures of our students. Discover how to design and execute events that inspire and guide young learners toward their dreams and aspirations. Equip students with the knowledge and resources they need to make informed career choices and set them on the path to success.



*Presented by: Oregon State University //
Adapted by: Career Connected Learning Resources Team*



TABLE OF CONTENTS



3) Introduction

4) Key Features of a Career Fair

5) Career Fair Benefits for Students

7) 6 Steps fo Steps for Success

8) Recommended Schedule of Activities

10) Who to Invite to a Career Fair

12) Sample Invitation Letter

13) Preparing Students for Success

15) Reflective Questions

20) About the Creator

WHAT IS A CAREER FAIR?



A Career Fair for middle and high school students is an event designed to expose students to a wide range of career options and educational pathways.

These fairs typically bring together representatives from various professions, industries, colleges, universities, vocational schools, and organizations to provide students with information, insights and inspiration about their future career choices.



WHAT ARE KEY FEATURES OF A CAREER FAIR?



Exhibitors: Various organizations, businesses, educational institutions and professionals set up booths or tables to showcase their careers, programs and opportunities. These exhibitors often include representatives from STEM fields, healthcare, arts and humanities, trades and business.

Interactive Activities: Many career fairs offer hands-on activities or demonstrations related to different careers. For example, students might have the chance to try out a science experiment, explore virtual reality simulations, or engage in mini workshops.

Informational Sessions: Workshops, presentations and panel discussions may be held during the event. These sessions often cover topics such as career planning, college admissions, financial aid, and the skills and education required for specific careers.

College and Educational Resources: Career Fairs often include representatives from colleges and universities who provide information about their programs, majors and admission requirements. This helps high school students plan their academic paths.

WHY IS A CAREER FAIR IMPORTANT FOR STUDENTS?



College and Educational Planning: Career fairs often include representatives from colleges and universities who can provide information about academic programs, majors, admission requirements and financial aid options.

Skill Development: Some career fairs offer hands-on activities and workshops that allow students to develop and practice skills relevant to specific careers. This can be especially beneficial for those interested in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields.

Résumé Building: Attending a career fair can provide students with insights into what employers are looking for in potential candidates. This knowledge can help them practice their résumés and cover letters to make a stronger impression in the job market.

Interview Practice: Engaging with professionals at career fairs can help students improve their communication and interview skills. They can practice asking questions, presenting themselves professionally and engaging in meaningful conversations.

Diverse Perspectives: Students can gain exposure to professionals from various backgrounds, which can broaden their horizons and encourage inclusivity and diversity in their career choices.

Clarification of Goals: By interacting with professionals and exploring different career options, students can clarify their career goals and aspirations. This can lead to more focused educational and career planning.

Confidence Building: Meeting professionals and engaging in discussions about their future can boost students' self-confidence and sense of purpose. It can help them see that their goals are achievable.



STEP-BY-STEP PLANNING SCHEDULE:



Planning and preparing a Career Fair for middle and high school students requires a detailed schedule to ensure that all tasks are completed efficiently. Here is a sample schedule to help you organize your Career Fair:



6 to 12 months before Career Fair:

Establish Objectives and Goals:

- Determine the specific goals and objectives of the career fair.

Form a Planning Committee:

- Assemble a team of educators, administrators and volunteers.

Set a Date and Secure Venue:

- Choose a date and secure a suitable venue for the event.



5 to 8 months before Career Fair:

Identify and Invite Exhibitors:

- Research and compile a list of potential exhibitors.
- Send formal invitations to exhibitors with event details.

Plan Event Logistics:

- Arrange for tables, chairs, signage, and equipment for exhibitors.
- Confirm access to electricity, Wi-Fi, and other technical needs.
- Create a layout for exhibitor booths and attendee flow.

Develop a Budget:

- Estimate costs for venue rental, materials, promotion, and any other expenses.

Promote the Event:

- Promote the launch using school newsletters, social media and flyers.
- Encourage teachers to inform students about the event.



3 to 6 months before Career Fair:

Registration for Students:

- Set up a registration process for students attending the Career Fair.
- Begin promoting registration to students.

Prepare Materials:

- Create informational packets, brochures, maps, and schedules for attendees.



2 to 4 months before Career Fair:

Welcome and Orientation Planning:

- Develop an agenda for the welcome and orientation session.

Facilitate Networking:

- Plan networking activities, icebreakers or speed networking sessions.



1 to 2 months before Career Fair:

Workshops and Presentations:

- Finalize the schedule of workshops, presentations, and panel discussions.
- Confirm speakers and topics.

Collect Feedback:

- Create feedback forms or surveys for exhibitors and attendees.

WHO TO INVITE TO A CAREER FAIR?



Inviting the right participants to a student career fair is crucial for providing valuable insights and opportunities to the students. The goal is to offer a diverse range of career options and educational pathways. Following are key participants to consider inviting:

1) Professionals and Industry Representatives:

Invite professionals from various industries, including STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), healthcare, business, arts and humanities, trades, and more.

2) Colleges and Universities:

Reach out to colleges, universities, and vocational schools to have representatives available to discuss academic programs, majors, admissions requirements, and financial aid options.

3) Trade and Technical Schools:

Include representatives from trade schools and technical colleges to highlight alternative education pathways and careers that do not necessarily require a traditional four-year college degree.

4) Community Organizations:

Partner with local community organizations, workforce development agencies, and nonprofits that offer career guidance, mentorship, and skill-building programs for students.

5) Government Agencies:

Invite representatives from government agencies or departments who can provide information about government-sponsored programs, scholarships and career resources.

6) Entrepreneurs and Small Business Owners:

Encourage local entrepreneurs and small business owners to participate, sharing their experiences in starting and running their businesses.

7) Nonprofit Organizations:

Include nonprofit organizations focused on specific career interests or causes, such as environmental conservation, healthcare advocacy or social justice.

8) Professional Associations:

Reach out to professional associations related to various industries (e.g., engineering, accounting, healthcare) to have representatives available to discuss career pathways and networking opportunities.

STEP-BY-STEP PLANNING SCHEDULE:



1 month before Career Fair

Confirm Logistics:

- Double-check venue logistics, exhibitor requirements and equipment.
- Ensure that promotional materials are distributed.

Follow-Up Communications:

- Send reminders and instructions to exhibitors and attendees.



1 to 2 weeks before Career Fair:

Prepare Registration and Signage:

- Set up registration tables and create directional signage.
- Assemble registration packets and materials.



1 day before Career Fair:

Final Check:

- Do a final walkthrough of the venue to ensure everything is in order.
- Test audiovisual equipment for presentations.



Day of Career Fair:

Event Execution:

- Welcome exhibitors and set up their booths.
- Ensure all volunteers and committee members are in place.
- Conduct the welcome and orientation session.
- Facilitate workshops, presentations and networking activities.
- Collect feedback from attendees and exhibitors.
- Oversee the teardown and clean-up process.



1 to 2 weeks after Career Fair:

Thank You Notes:

- Send notes or emails to express appreciation for participants' support.

Evaluate and Review:

- Review attendee and exhibitor feedback.
- Assess the overall success of the event and identify areas for improvement.
- Share feedback with the planning committee for future reference.



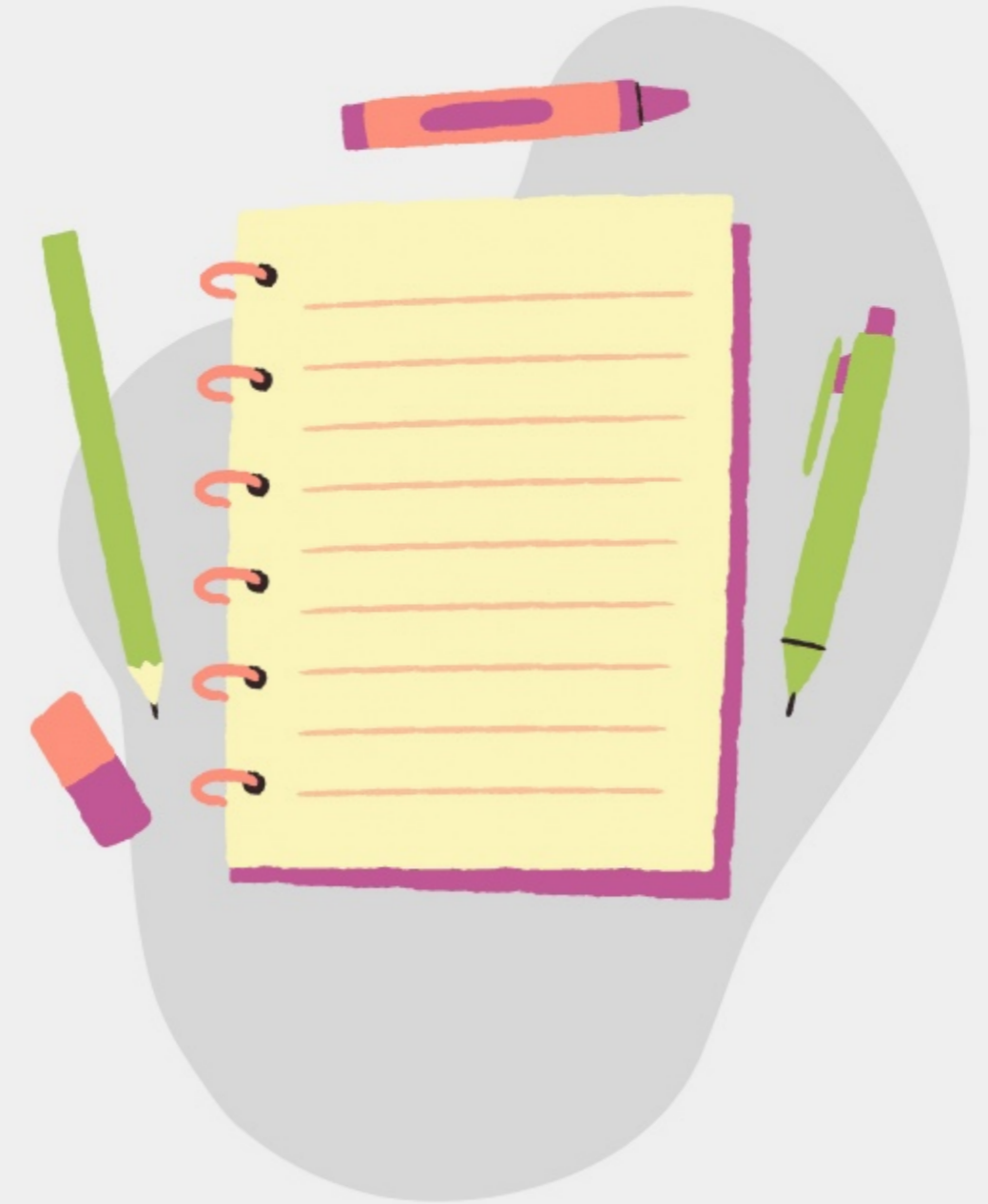
Ongoing:

Follow-Up and Support:

- Continue to provide resources to students as they explore their career options.
- Consider organizing follow-up events or activities throughout the school year.

6 KEY STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL CAREER FAIR:

1. Define objectives
2. Identify participants (employers, alumni, professionals)
3. Secure a venue
4. Promote the event
5. Prepare students (résumés, elevator pitches)
6. Implement the fair



WHY IS A CAREER FAIR IMPORTANT FOR STUDENTS?



Career Fairs aim to empower young individuals with the knowledge and resources needed to make informed decisions about their education and career choices. These events play a crucial role in helping students transition from school to the workforce or higher education by giving them a glimpse of the possibilities available to them and the steps they need to take to achieve their goals.

- **Networking:** Students can interact with professionals, ask questions and gain insights into different career paths.
- **Information Gathering:** Allows students to learn about job responsibilities, educational requirements and the real-world experiences of professionals.
- **Career Exploration:** The fairs encourage students to explore various career options and discover their interests and passions. They can speak with professionals who share their experiences and offer guidance on choosing a career path.
- **Inspiration:** Meeting professionals who are passionate about their work can inspire students to set ambitious goals and pursue their dreams.

WHO TO INVITE TO A CAREER FAIR?



9) Career Counselors and Advisors:

Have school career counselors and academic advisors available to provide one-on-one guidance and answer questions about academic planning and career development.

10) Parents and Family Members

Encourage parents and family members to participate.

11) Industry-Specific Organizations:

Consider industry-specific organizations or groups that can provide hands-on demonstrations, workshops, or activities related to their fields.

12) Alumni:

Invite alumni from the school or local schools who have pursued various career paths to share their experiences and provide guidance.

13) Mentors and Role Models:

Identify individuals who can serve as mentors or role models for students. These individuals can offer guidance and encouragement.

14) Nonprofit Organizations:

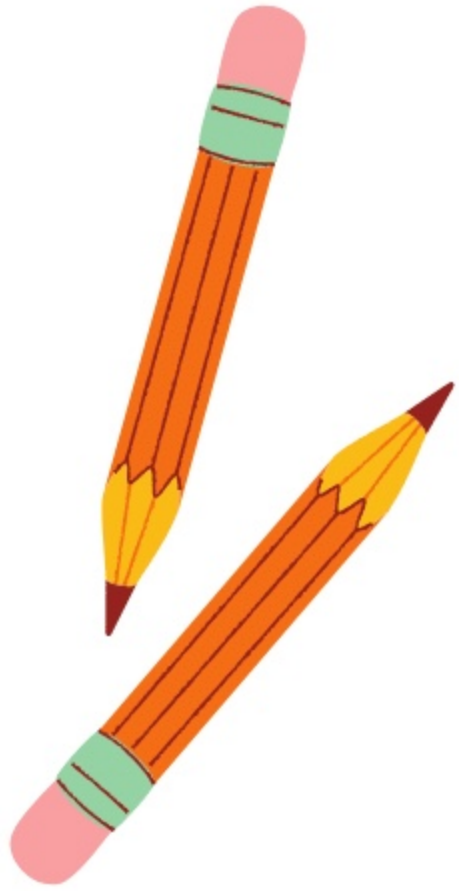
Include nonprofit organizations focused on specific career interests or causes, such as environmental conservation, healthcare advocacy or social justice.

15) Professional Associations:

Reach out to professional associations related to various industries (e.g., engineering, accounting, healthcare) to have representatives available to discuss career pathways and networking opportunities.



SAMPLE INVITATION



Dear [Partner's Name or Organization's Name],

I hope this email finds you well. We are excited to announce that [School Name] will be hosting a career fair for our students on [Date], and we would like to extend a warm invitation to you and your organization to participate as a valued partner in this important event.

Event Details:

- Date: [Date] - Time: [Start to End time] - Location: [School Name, School Address]

About Our Career Fair:

The purpose of our career fair is to provide our [middle, high school] students with an opportunity to explore various career options, gain insights into different industries, and learn about the educational pathways that can lead to their dream careers. We believe that your organization's expertise and experience would greatly benefit our students as they navigate their future career choices.

What We Offer to Our Partners:

- A dedicated booth space to showcase your organization's work and career opportunities.
- The chance to interact with our motivated and inquisitive students who are eager to learn about different professions.
- Networking opportunities with other partners, educators, and professionals in attendance.
- Visibility and recognition within our school community as a supporter of student career development.

How to Confirm Your Participation:

- Please let us know if you are interested in participating as a partner in our career fair by [RSVP deadline].
- You can confirm your attendance by replying to this email or contacting us at [Your contact information].

If you have any specific requirements or questions, please don't hesitate to reach out. We are happy to work with you to ensure your participation is both enjoyable and beneficial. We look forward to the possibility of partnering with you to inspire and empower our students as they explore their future career pathways.

Warm regards,

[Your Name]

[Your Title, School, and Contact Information]



PREPARE STUDENTS FOR SUCCESS



Preparing students for success at a school career fair involves helping them develop the knowledge, skills and mindset needed to make the most of the event. Here are some steps to ensure students are well prepared:



Inform and Build Excitement:

- Start by informing students about the upcoming career fair well in advance. Share details such as the date, time, location, and purpose of the event.
- Highlight the benefits of attending, such as the opportunity to explore different careers, learn from professionals, and plan their future.



Research and Self-Reflection:

- Encourage students to explore their own interests, strengths and values. Ask them to think about their skills, hobbies, and the types of activities they enjoy.
- Suggest that they research potential careers and industries that align with their interests and skills. Online resources and career assessment tools can be helpful.



Set Clear Goals:

- Have students set specific goals for what they want to achieve at the career fair. For example, they might aim to learn about three different careers or connect with professionals in their chosen field.



Prepare Questions:

Teach students how to ask thoughtful questions. Encourage them to prepare a list of questions to ask professionals, such as:

- What are the typical job responsibilities in your field?
- What educational or training path did you follow to get to your current position?
- Are there any skills or qualities that are particularly important in this career?
- What advice do you have for someone interested in pursuing this career?



Dress and Presentation:

- Emphasize the importance of dressing appropriately for the event. Encourage professional attire, such as business-casual clothing.
- Teach students about the importance of a firm handshake, maintaining eye contact, and using polite and confident communication skills.

PREPARE STUDENTS FOR SUCCESS



Résumé Building:

- If applicable, help high school students create a basic résumé or update their existing ones. Include their education, extracurricular activities, and any relevant volunteer or work experience.



Attitude and Open-Mindedness:

- Stress the importance of being open to new ideas and career possibilities. Remind students that it's okay to explore different options—they don't need to have their entire future planned out at this stage.



Elevator Pitch & Networking:

- Teach students how to craft a brief, compelling elevator pitch about themselves. This should include their name, grade, career interests, and why they are attending the career fair.
- Explain the concept of networking and the importance of building professional relationships. Teach students how to introduce themselves, exchange contact information and follow up with thank-you emails.



Follow-Up Plan:

- Teach students the importance of follow-up after the career fair. Discuss how they can reach out to professionals they connected with, thank them for their time, and ask additional questions or seek guidance.



Workshop Attendance:

- Encourage students to attend workshops or presentations during the career fair. These sessions can provide valuable insights into career planning and development.



Debriefing:

- After the career fair, hold a debriefing session with students to discuss what they learned, what surprised them, and how their goals were met. Encourage them to reflect on their experiences.

LOOKING FOR RESOURCES TO SET UP A CAREER FAIR AT YOUR SCHOOL?



A Career Fair can be successfully set up through collaboration with a diverse group of partners, including local businesses, colleges and universities, vocational schools, nonprofit organizations, professional associations, government agencies, parent-teacher associations, alumni networks, local community organizations, career counselors and educators, student organizations, volunteers, local media, online resources, sponsors and students themselves.

This collective effort ensures a well-rounded and meaningful event that provides students with valuable insights and opportunities for their future career paths.

STANDARDS OVERVIEW



Education standards provide a framework to ensure the effectiveness and relevance of CCL resources. The ASCA Standards integrated into this quick start guide focus on holistic student development. They stress the significance of the whole self, understanding the necessity of post-secondary education, critical thinking, perseverance, and effective communication, among other essential skills. On the other hand, the OAR Rules highlight the importance of tailoring education plans based on personal and career interests. They emphasize tracking academic progress, documenting achievements, and underscoring the value of comprehensive school counseling and career education.

DIVERSE LEARNING STYLES & COOPERATIVE STRATEGIES



Encourage students to explore different ways to organize information and cooperate with their peers. Each Career Connect Oregon lesson plan comes embedded with these strategies.

These tools can improve engagement in classrooms, trainings, in-services, and conferences, too!

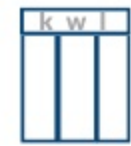
GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS



OUTLINE



MIND MAP



KWL CHART



VENN DIAGRAM



STORYBOARD



CHARTS



TIMELINE

COOPERATIVE LEARNING STRATEGIES



THINK-PAIR-SHARE
Students think, talk with peers, then share with the class.



GALLERY WALK
Students walk around the room reflecting on one another's posted work.



3 STAY - 1 STRAY
One member from each group visits other groups, acting as a reporter and exchanging information.



FOUR CORNERS
Students self-sort, moving near statements posted in the room they agree with and discuss reactions.



JIGSAW
Groups become "experts" in one aspect of a learning objective.



NUMBERED HEADS TOGETHER
Students in groups collaborate to ensure mutual understanding, each prepared to answer a question tied to their assigned number.

ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES



Varying assessments can keep your lessons fun and engaging while ensuring they meet your lesson's objectives. The following assessments offer different ways to assess students. Choose assessments that best match your circumstances.

QUICK REFERENCE ASSESSMENTS

Varying assessments can keep your lessons fun and engaging while ensuring they meet your lesson's objectives. The following assessments offer different ways to assess students. Choose assessments that best match your circumstances.



EXIT TICKET

Students respond to a prompt or question on a 3x5 card or slip of paper before leaving class.



INTERACTIVE GAMES

Students play an analog or digital game that tests their learning competitively or cooperatively.



MULTIMEDIA PROJECT

Students create slide decks, videos, posters, drawings, diagrams, how-to guides, and mini publications.



QUIZZES

True or false, multiple choice, short answer, thumbs up or down, and verbal responses are all ways to quickly assess student learning.



WRITTEN RESPONSES

Short essays (descriptive, narrative, persuasive), poems, advertisements, menus, and speeches are all useful ways to show learning.



DISCUSSION

Small group, individual, and whole-class Socratic seminars help students stay engaged and practice reasoning skills.



ORAL PRESENTATIONS

Try planned or impromptu oral presentations. Students can develop these in groups or on their own.



POLLS

Hands, fingers, thumbs, and pen and paper are great for analog polls. Digital polls are convenient for tallying results quickly.



RANKING ACTIVITIES

Students rank items and explain their reasoning. A great way to measure critical thinking skills.



OBSERVATION

This can include both teacher and student perspectives, along with student self-reflection and peer feedback.

Student Preparation Activities



Prompt students to reflect on:

- **Research companies:** Students can research companies and organizations who will be attending to discover how their interests align.
- **Elevator Pitch and Resumés:** Have students practice a 30-second introduction and write a resumé listing their skills and experiences.

Here are a couple questions to get you started:

Question 1: Which careers or jobs caught your attention the most at the career fair, and why did they interest you?

Question 2: Did visiting the career fair change the way you think about any particular job or career? If so, how?

Question 3: How did the activities you did to get ready for the career fair, like practicing your elevator pitch or learning about resúmes writing, make you feel more confident at the event?



STUDENT REFLECTION USING EXIT TICKETS



Formative assessments can help students build confidence and critical thinking skills, while providing teachers with real-time feedback they can use to enhance further instruction. Modify these exit ticket suggestions to best suit your classroom!



SIGHT

- **Draw an emoji** of your emotional response to the lesson. Write about how it relates to what you learned.
- **Take a selfie** of an expression reacting to something you learned and share it!
- **Draw a visual summary** of images that narrate the lesson. This could be a comic strip or an infographic.
- **Recall a movie scene** that relates to the lesson and explain why.
- **Label a line graph** with peaks and valleys describing how you and other students engaged with the lesson.



SOUND

- **Think of song lyrics** that describe something you learned and explain your reasoning.
- **Listen to a brief audio clip** (music, quote, sounds) and explain how it connects to what you have learned.
- **Record yourself** sharing a 20-second response to your favorite part of the lesson.
- **Listen to a peer** share their favorite part of the lesson, and then share yours with them.
- **Connect a sound** to your mood during the lesson and explain how the sound relates.



SMELL

- **Create a smell continuum** with your favorite and least favorite smells; rate the lesson and explain.
- **Use scented markers or stickers**, and make a connection between the scent and a key concept.
- **Relate the lesson to a specific scent**, explaining the similarities and reasons behind your choice.
- **Choose 3 main ideas**, and relate them to 3 different smells. Explain your reasoning.



TASTE

- **Create a recipe**, choosing ingredients from the lesson. Name the recipe with a relevant title.
- **Use a food metaphor or simile** to describe something you learned in the lesson.
- **Divide a paper plate** into portions and label each portion with key concepts from the lesson.
- **Recall a food memory** related to the lesson and write down why you chose it.



TOUCH

- **Use the provided material** (blocks, clay, wire) to build a concept from the lesson that stood out to you.
- **Give a thumbs up, down or sideways** to indicate your level of understanding after the lesson.
- **Move around the room** to defend, challenge, or qualify your level of agreement with an argument or concept.
- **Build a collage** that represents the most important takeaways from the lesson.
- **Act out a concept** from the lesson that you think is most important.



THOUGHT

- **Agree or disagree** with a prompt and write down your reasons with examples.
- **Write about a personal connection** you can make with today's lesson and the concepts you have learned.
- **3-2-1** Jot down three ideas you learned, two ideas you want to learn and one question you have.
- **Select an adjective** that best describes the lesson. Explain your reasoning.
- **Write important ideas** from the lesson and rank them in terms of importance.

CONCLUSION

The Career Fair Resource offers a valuable opportunity to bridge classroom learning with relevant professions, presenting students with a diverse range of potential career paths.

By following this straightforward guide, educators can efficiently plan and execute a memorable event that not only informs students but also inspires them to envision their futures.

Remember, this resource is not just about introducing jobs –it’s about igniting passions, broadening horizons, and building connections between students and their surrounding community.



ABOUT THE CREATOR



www.oregonstate.edu
1500 SW Jefferson Way
Corvallis, OR 97331

Oregon State University

Founded more than 150 years ago, Oregon State University (OSU) is a public institution based in Corvallis. OSU offers more than 200 undergraduate-degree programs along with a variety of graduate and doctoral degrees. It has the seventh-largest engineering college in the nation for 2023.

Undergraduate enrollment for all colleges combined averages over 32,000 while an additional 5,000 students are engaged in post-graduate coursework through the university. In 2023, over 37,000 students were enrolled at OSU – making it the largest university in the state.

Chartered as a land-grant university initially, OSU became one of the four inaugural members of the Sea Grant in 1971. It joined the Space Grant and Sun Grant research consortia in 1991 and 2003, making it one of only three schools in the nation to obtain land, sun, sea and space grant memberships.

CAREER FAIR TIPS

This Quick-Start Guide to Career Fairs introduces and explores the vital role that career fairs play in shaping the futures of our students. Discover how to design and execute events that inspire and guide young learners toward their dreams and aspirations. Equip students with the knowledge and resources they need to make informed career choices and set them on the path to success.



*Presented by: Oregon State University //
Adapted by: Career Connected Learning Resources Team*

