



## EMPLOYEE-LED ACTIVITY

# Share My Career Session

## What Does STEM Mean to You?

Welcome and thank you for taking the time to contribute to the education of students in your community! Sharing your knowledge and passion for your work can be extremely valuable for students and educators. By doing so, you can inspire students to dream, set goals, focus more on their school work, and engage in and explore new subjects. You will also guide students as they begin to think about the many options they have for pursuing a career that they will enjoy, that will challenge them, and that will help support their families, communities, and the world.

### EMPLOYEE INTRODUCTORY NOTES

This *Employee-Led Activity: What Does STEM Mean to You? Session*, along with the Employee Guide, are designed to help you have a positive and meaningful experience sharing your love of STEM and career background with a group of students in your community. This session could take place at a school during a regular class period, an after-school club, an evening community night, or a career fair event.

Holding a preplanning conversation with the classroom teacher or adult facilitating the group of students is critical to ensure your session is valuable for the students. Be sure to reference the Employee Guide for helpful information to plan your school visit.

This *Employee-Led Activity: What Does STEM Mean to You? Session* could run as short as 25-30 minutes in length or extend to 45-60 minutes depending on the time frame available to you and your preplanning with the teacher or adult facilitator.

The information below is designed to help guide your time with the students. There are two options presented, so you can choose what fits best for you, the students, the setting, and time frame. You do not have to cover every topic noted below but can choose which items make the most sense given your preplanning conversations with the classroom teacher, the age/grade level of the students, and the amount of time you have for the session. For elementary-aged students, do your best to present the concepts using language and terms that they will understand.

Students will value an authentic and clearly worded presentation that engages them and inspires them to ask questions. Think of this document as a guide to help you think about your presentation, but be sure to value the preplanning session and be open to adding other elements to your session as well. Your company may also have brochures, a job search website, summer internships, and/or other experiences/events that students would find both informative and interesting.

## OPTION #1

### Welcome and Introductions

#### 5–10 Minutes

- Introduce yourself and extend a warm welcome and hearty thanks to the students and teacher for inviting you into their classroom and school.
- Tell students they can raise their hand at any time to ask questions.
- Explain the STEM field that you work in, as well as what you do and who you work for (company and division in the company). Dress the part if you can. Wear your work clothes so students see how you look on an average day.
- At this stage of your introduction, consider asking: “What comes to mind when you think of STEM?” This question may spark comments from students that could reinforce correct information and/or give you a chance to correct misconceptions that students may have.
- Remember to keep the age level of the students in mind and consider if you’ll need to define any technical vocabulary to help them better understand your job. Be prepared to define words in simple, relevant, and relatable language.

### Career & STEM Connections

#### 5–10 Minutes

Use this section of your presentation to dive more deeply into how your interest in STEM got you where you are today. Be prepared to explain any of the following items:

- Your favorite subjects in school while you were growing up
- What interests you had (both inside and outside of school) while you were the students' age
- When you became interested in STEM and why. Was there a defining moment?
- Once you knew you were interested in STEM, what you did to learn more or pursue this passion?
- What your path looked like from your high school classes to the job you have today
- What your company does, and why your company's work is important and relevant
- How your company contributes to the local community and the world at large
- What specifically you do and how this contributes to your company's work
- What STEM skills—math, science, engineering, technology—you use in your job
- What you like best about doing your job. (It may help to describe a typical day, including what your responsibilities are and who you work with.)
- What you do to keep learning and stay up-to-date on STEM topics
- How STEM affects the world we live in today and why it is important for the future

## Engaging Students in Exploring STEM

20–30 Minutes

- Explain to students that STEM advances are enabling humans to explore new and exciting places that humans have never been to before...or have never stayed in for too long!
- Ask: If it were up to you, where should the STEM field explore next and why would you make this choice? Ideas include:
  - The deepest ocean trenches
  - Unexplored rainforests
  - Inside and underneath glaciers
  - One of Jupiter's moons such as Europa or Leda
  - Mars
  - Deep inside the Earth's crust
  - The surface of a comet or asteroid
  - A black hole (if we could get there!)
  - Anywhere else you'd like to explore
- Encourage pairs of students to make a decision and develop a rationale that explains their reasoning.
- Then (depending on the resources you have available) distribute **modeling clay, drafting paper, or blank paper** to each pair. Instruct them to sketch a vehicle or tool that humans could use to explore this extreme or faraway location.
- If time and/or resources allows, pairs may use the Internet to research the area's conditions, which may help them make design decisions. If devices with Internet access are not available, students may also rely on their background knowledge.
- For an added challenge, encourage older or more advanced students to also consider one of the following:
  - How their vehicle or tool could protect humans from the location's extreme conditions
  - How to ensure that their exploration has minimal environmental impact
- Wrap up this portion of the lesson by encouraging pairs to share their decision and designs with another group or the larger class.

## ● Closure and Summary Notes

### 5 Minutes

When you come to the end of your session with the students, thank the class and teacher again for their time and participation. Please be sure to share resources from your company and from the STEM Careers Coalition website ([stemcareerscoalition.org](https://stemcareerscoalition.org)) that students or teachers can explore for more information.

Be prepared to share 2-3 succinct closing points that help pull together the experience for the students. These 2-3 points could include:

- A quick summary of why you love STEM, what STEM means to you, and why you think STEM is important.
- Words of encouragement that remind students of the many, varied parts of the STEM field and the opportunities that this field provides for students to pursue their unique interests, passions, and ideas.
- Specific advice to stay engaged in school and/or to seek opportunities to learn about diverse topics in order to discover what they may want to consider as a career path.
- Additional resources students could access from your company, if available, such as a website, internships, summer camps, or community extension experiences to learn more about your field.

## OPTION #2

This option is designed if you know you only have 20-25 minutes to speak with students and/or if you are possibly speaking to many groups of students throughout a school day or during an after-school career fair or community night event. (Of course, you can also draw upon these ideas if you are conducting a longer session in a classroom with one group of students.)

### ● Introduction

#### 3 Minutes

Allow time for the students to get to know who you were when you were their age. Where did you grow up? What did you enjoy doing in school? What were your favorite subjects?

### ● Career and STEM Connections

#### 5 Minutes

Use this section of your presentation to dive more deeply into how your interest in STEM got you where you are today. How did you transition from the student you just described to the person you are now? How or when did you become interested in STEM? What do you find most exciting about STEM careers? Why did you decide on your career?

### ● Engaging Students in Exploring STEM

#### 10 Minutes

Explain that STEM advances allow us to explore new and exciting places where humans have never been to before...or have never stayed in for too long!

Ask: If it were up to you, where should the STEM field focus on exploring next, why would you make this choice, and how should we begin to explore it?

Distribute **drafting paper** or **blank paper** to pairs of students and encourage them to sketch a vehicle or tool that humans could use to explore this extreme or faraway location.

### ● Future

#### 5 Minutes

Explain that, in the future, it's very likely that students could pursue careers related to the exploration of the extreme place they just selected. Opportunities for STEM and exploration are limitless!

Connect the activity back to your own career and tell the class that you also think about what you aspire to do next. Take a moment to explain what STEM challenges you still want to try to solve.

### ● Wrap-Up

#### 2 Minutes

Conclude by encouraging students to stay engaged in school and seek as many opportunities as they can to investigate different parts of the STEM field as they begin to consider future careers.

Be sure to thank the students and the teacher or adult facilitator at the end of your session. You may also share resources from your company or from the STEM Careers Coalition website ([stemcareerscoalition.org](http://stemcareerscoalition.org)) that students or teachers can explore for more information.