**Purpose**

Conducting informational interviews is a valuable strategy when you’re considering potential career paths. These interviews offer real-world insights into various professions by having you engage with people working in the field. In this activity, you’ll acquire firsthand knowledge about a career, determine if it aligns with your interests, and understand the steps required to pursue a career in that area.

## Process

1. To prepare for your interview, read the interview guidelines:

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| **General Interviewing Tips**   * Schedule an appointment ahead of time. Doing so will help ensure the person you’re interviewing has time to talk. You might schedule the appointment by email, a phone call, a letter, or face to face, depending on whom you’re interviewing. Communicate professionally and politely. * Arrive on time with all your supplies (script, paper, pens). * Ask your subject if it’s OK to record the interview. Take good notes, whether or not you record. If interviewees are speaking too quickly, politely ask them to slow down. * If it’s OK with the interviewee, take their picture. * Ask your interview subject open-ended questions to avoid yes or no answers. You want to have a structure but allow room for spontaneous questions and answers. Allow the interview to go off on a tangent if it’s relevant, but don’t forget to bring the conversation back to your original questions. * Remember: You’re there to listen to your interview subject; let them do most of the talking. * Be sure to write down the name of the person (ask them to spell their name, if necessary) and their title, contact information, and the date you met. * Be polite. Always thank interviewees for their time, and then send a follow-up thank-you note (an email, letter, or card). |

1. Find potential candidates to interview about your career of interest. They can be students or trainees in that career; professionals; or teachers and professors. Ask your teachers, family members, and other community leaders if they know anyone in your chosen field. A local university website is also a great place to look for candidates. Use the table included in Part 1 of the Climate Career Exploration Informational Interview worksheet to gather information about potential interviewees.
2. Using Part 2 of the worksheet, put together your interview script—your list of questions.

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1. Conduct your interview using the script you’ve put together in advance. Write up a one-page summary of what you learned from the interview, making sure to highlight the most important information.

**Part 1**

**Directions:** Fill out the table with your potential interviewee’s information.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Career title:** | | |
| **Name of person in this field** | **Title and affiliation**  **(Institution, agency, or company)** | **Contact information**  **(website, email address, and/or phone number)** |
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**Part 2**

**Directions:** Prepare for your interview by writing a script—questions you intend to ask your interview subject. Be sure to bring this script with you to your interview. We’ve included some suggested questions to ask, but feel free to ask additional questions, including any your teacher has recommended.

**Interview script**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **How did you arrive in your current position or field?** |  |
| **What challenges exist? What are their greatest accomplishments?** |  |
| **What does a “day-in-the-life” of this career look like?** |  |
| **How can someone get into this career path? What education, certifications, or experiences are needed?** |  |
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