

NETWORKING



AGENDA

- Starter
- Make the Connection
- The Right Way and the Right Time
- In the Network
- Conclusion
- Student Assessment

Objectives

Students will understand what networking is.

Students will identify the right way and the right time to network.

Students will recognize that the people they know can help them to network.

Materials Needed

- One 10-foot piece of string for each student in the class (Part I)

Starter (3 minutes)

Ask students if they can explain the phrase “six degrees of separation.” Lead students to the understanding that the phrase means that you can link yourself to anyone in the world in fewer than six “steps.”

Guide the class through an example, linking the class to someone remote and writing each step on the board. For example, ask students if anyone knows the mayor. If not, ask students if anyone knows of another person who might know the mayor (perhaps the superintendent). Ask if anyone knows the superintendent. If not, ask who might know the superintendent (a principal). Does anyone know the principal? Continue in this way, making the connection back to the class.

Explain to students that the process of “knowing someone who knows someone” is called networking and that today’s lesson will help them learn the right way and the right time to network for job opportunities.

Part I Make the Connection (10 minutes)

Purpose: Students identify the right way to network.

1. Students demonstrate the process of networking.

Tell students that they are going to do an experiment to see how easily information can travel. Ask a volunteer to think up a simple statement that uses their name (e.g., “Jane Smith is looking for a job.”). Tell the class that the goal is to get the message to all of the students in the room, but each student can tell only two others.

Ask students how many links they think there will be between the volunteer and the last students to hear the message. Hand all the pieces of string (one for each student) to the volunteer and explain to the class that they will mark the links by holding a piece of string between them each time the information is shared.

Have the volunteer quietly tell the message to two other students and, holding the end of all the strings, pass half of the strings to each of them. Have those students tell two more students and pass half of their strings to each of them. This process should continue until all students have heard the statement. (Students should continue holding their pieces of the string and passing the rest along. If the first student was holding 20 pieces, the next two should each have 10 strings, the next four should each have 5 strings, and so on.)

Ask students to determine the number of links between the first student and the last. Explain that the strings represent a network of people. Networking allows information to be communicated rapidly in a short amount of time.

2. Students learn the benefits of networking.

Ask students to suggest how networking relates to looking for a job. Lead students to the understanding that networking is the process of telling people that you are looking for a job.

Ask students to imagine the following scenario: A student they have never seen before comes up to them, hands them a piece of paper, and walks away. The paper says that there is going to be a surprise quiz in math tomorrow. Ask students if they are likely to believe the note.

Then, have students imagine that a friend from their math class tells them the same information. Ask students if they would pay more attention to the friend. Have students suggest reasons why.

Remind students that, when hiring, employers are trying to make a decision that is very important to them. In making this decision, they gather information from sources they trust. Explain that they are interested in recommendations from people they know, such as friends, family, coworkers, etc.

Lead students to recognize that these connections are more effective than a blind application or resume alone. Mention that some companies don't even publicize jobs that are open and rely solely on word of mouth.

Part II The Right Way and the Right Time (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students identify the right way and the right time to network.

1. Students learn the steps of networking.

Explain to students that there are three steps for telling people that you are looking for a job:

1. Say, for example, "I am looking for a job to earn money for college and to get work experience."
2. Tell the person the type of job you are looking for. Use phrasing such as, "I would like to find a job in the health care industry because I want to be a doctor."
3. Ask people to help you by saying, "If you know anybody who might help me find a job like that, I would appreciate it if you would let me know." You may also say, "If you hear about a job that I might be qualified for, I would appreciate it if you called me."

2. Students learn the right way to network.

Tell students the following story:

I had a friend come over the other day, and she was very unhappy. She told me that she was at a party and saw the manager of a department store. She needed a job, so she went up to the manager and told her, "I really need a job. I'll do any type of work. Please give me a job." My friend said the manager just looked at her and walked away.

Ask students why they think the manager walked away. Lead students to recognize that the friend was too pushy and sounded too desperate. Explain to students that sounding pushy or desperate puts the applicant in a bad light and can make potential employers uncomfortable.

3. Students learn the right time to network.

Ask students what the department store manager was doing before your friend saw her. Lead students to the understanding that they don't know, and that neither did the friend. Tell students that perhaps the manager had just had a fight with a close friend.

Ask students to consider how this might have affected the way the manager treated your friend. Explain that networking should be done only when the person you are speaking to is fairly comfortable and focused on the conversation. Discuss with students some suggestions for opening up conversations about jobs. (Refer to the suggestions provided in step one of this activity.)

4. Students practice appropriate networking.

Have students work in pairs to suggest something that would have been more appropriate for the friend to say, such as, "I'm looking for a job in cosmetics. May I call you tomorrow to arrange a time that's convenient for you to meet with me?"

Provide students with other situations (e.g., your friend's mother owns a music store that you would like to work in, your uncle is in politics and you'd like a job at the mayor's office) and have them phrase appropriate networking statements using the structure provided above.

Part III In the Network (20 minutes)

Purpose: Students recognize that the people they know can help them to network.

1. Students identify the kinds of people who may help them find a job.

Ask students whom they would talk to about getting a job. Write student responses on the board.

The list will likely include people such as teachers, employees they know, friends, and family. Explain that all of these people are helpful. Also, point out that sometimes family members can be a bigger help than students think. Remind students that networking is all about "knowing someone who knows someone." Family may not have direct connections to a job, but they might know somebody who does.

Ask students, "Whom do you think can help you the most to find a job—the owner of a business or your mom?" Have students give their reasons. (Students may choose the owner because the owner may know about more jobs, or some may select their mothers because they are more interested in the students.)

Tell students it is important that they explore all possibilities when networking and not rule out anyone prematurely. Explain to them that it is as important to talk to someone who will pass their name around as it is to try to find a person who may know about a lot of jobs.

2. Students brainstorm specific people to include in their networks.

Have students individually brainstorm all of the people who might help them in their job hunts. If students are familiar with clustering (a graphic organizer for brainstorming around a central theme), have them put themselves at the center; draw circles for family, school, friends, and activities around their name; and include names and connections in each area.

Instruct students to list everyone who might possibly be helpful to them, even if they aren't sure how. Also, encourage students to list names of people their contacts might know.

Point out to students that they probably know many more people than they think.

Conclusion (2 minutes)

Remind students that networking is a process that never stops. Even when they aren't actively looking for a job, they should develop relationships that might help them in their careers. Elicit from students the following **key points** that were taught in this lesson:

- Networking means asking other people to help with your job search.
- Any time can be the right time to talk about job possibilities as long as the other person is interested in the conversation.
- Networking is a tool to let others know you are looking for a job and to discover job openings.
- It is as important to talk to someone who will pass your name around as it is to try to find a person who may know about a lot of jobs.

Student Assessment

1. Define "networking" and explain why it is important.
2. List four things a good networker does and says.
3. List three people you can use for networking and explain how each of these people may be able to help you.

LESSON EXTENSIONS

Using Quotations

“Every successful businessperson can point to one item that is the key to their success...It’s almost always a \$9.95 Rolodex.”

Explain that a Rolodex is a filing device that organizes contact information; it’s similar to a contact list on a cell phone or in software such as Outlook. Have students ask people they know to tell them about five of their most important contacts, how long they’ve known each person, and how they got to know these people. Discuss the answers in class.

Addressing Multiple Learning Styles

Discuss that networking works both ways and that helping others find work builds lasting relationships. Create a class bulletin board for job tips and referrals. Have students choose partners to encourage them in their efforts.

Writing in Your Journal

Have students reflect on the idea of networking. Have them answer the following questions: Is this intimidating to you? Do you think that networking sounds easy? What tips do you have for people who find networking difficult? What tips do you want regarding networking?

Have students share the tips they want and the tips that they can give others.

Using Technology

Have students use the internet to locate professional, service, volunteer, and mentoring organizations. Have them research information about the organizations they find.

Have each student write a paragraph summarizing the different organizations they found and their contact information. Include their paragraphs in the class job-hunting binder.

Homework

Have the class poll students in school who have part-time jobs. Have them find out what these students do and how they found work.

Have the class create two graphs, one that shows the jobs students hold and another that shows how they got them.

Additional Resources

Have students read *Make Things Happen: The Key to Networking for Teens* by Lara Zielin.

Have small groups list tips for networking and choose one tip they can put into action.