

Choose a field that interests you

To find a job shadowing opportunity, start by deciding what type of career you are interested in. Think about your passions and skills, and search for a job that applies to them. Consider the following factors:

- **Location:** Choose a place that has a reasonable commute.
- **Setting:** If you know what setting you want to work in, such as in an office, from home or outdoors, this could help narrow down your potential career choices.
- **Interests:** Finding a job that relates closely to your interests or hobbies may increase your satisfaction with your career.
- **People:** Knowing what type of people you want to work with, for and around can help you choose an appropriate job or field.

Make a list of jobs and companies that interest you

Since your first choice to shadow may not be available, it is important to make a list of companies and positions you would like to shadow. If you can, find at least three potential options.

Find a professional contact

The next step is to find a professional to connect you to the business. Start with people you know; you may already have a personal connection to the company you want to shadow. Search the company's website for their human resources or public relations department's contact information. Then you can email the department you want to shadow to inquire about possible opportunities. You could also call the company's office directly to ask to be put in contact with a professional to shadow.

Make your request

Once you have figured out your professional contact, write an email to ask permission to shadow them. This will be among the first impressions that you make with the professionals of your desired career, so proofread your email for clarity and accuracy.

The following template is to help you compose an email regarding acquiring a job shadow opportunity. Fill in the appropriate information specific to the person you are contacting.

Dear Dr./Ms./Mr. _____:

My name is _____. I am currently a [year in school] at Boyertown Area Senior High School. I am in the process of exploring careers in _____ (your broad idea of career - ex. healthcare) and I am very interested in the field of (more specific example -e.g., dentistry, occupational therapy, pediatric oncology, etc.) _____. I am in the process of seeking out opportunities for shadowing in order to better understand what it is like to be a _____. I found your e-mail through the _____ website (Or, alternatively, I was given your contact information by _____). If you are willing to allow students to shadow, I would welcome an opportunity to observe you work and to hear more about your experiences and to get your advice on how to prepare for a career in _____. I realize that you are busy and that your time is valuable. If you have any questions or concerns, you can reach me by e-mail (use your personal since school won't let you get outside emails) or phone (###-###-####).

Thank you for your help.

Kind Regards,

First and Last Name

Script for contacting by phone

Hello, my name is _____ and I am a high school student at Boyertown Area Senior High School. I am contacting you because part of our mandatory graduation requirement is that we spend time shadowing someone in their career field. I am interested in becoming a (an) _____. I would like to set up a day where I would be able to shadow you. The requirement for an in-person shadow is at least 6 hours long. Please let me know either way if this is something you are willing to let me do.

Thank you.

What if the answer is “No?”

You may get turned down; don't get discouraged—this is a normal part of the process. As a general rule, it is always a good idea to thank a professional for responding, even if you don't get the answer you were hoping for. This keeps the relationship going, which might open up other opportunities down the line. Below is a script that might help you move on to someone else in the company that has time to assist.

Dear Dr./Mr./Ms. _____,

Thank you for taking the time to respond to my e-mail. I understand that it is not possible to shadow with you at this time, but I appreciate that you followed up with me about my request. I wanted to ask if you would be willing to put me in touch with a colleague or two that might be willing and available to shadow.

Thank you again for all of your help.

Kind Regards,

Ask questions

When you find a company or professional who accepts your request, you can also share the information from the Job Shadow portion of Career Portfolio with that person. Make sure that you get important information such as when to come in and what to bring. If they ask for any additional information from you, promptly fulfill their request. Do not be afraid to ask questions. Knowing details ahead of time ensures that your experience goes smoothly and can help you feel more relaxed while you job shadow.

Write a thank you note

It is both courteous and wise to send a brief note expressing your gratitude after shadowing someone at work. Thank them for the experience, for sharing their time and expertise. Outline the benefits the experience had for you. This can further strengthen a lasting impression and professional connection that may benefit you when you're ready to start applying for jobs.

Dear _____,

Thank you for taking time out of your schedule to serve as a job shadow mentor for the day. I learned a great deal about how _____. I really enjoyed taking a tour of the facility.

Thank you,
