

# Inspiring Women

*A step-by-step guide to help teachers run activities to inspire young women using volunteers from the world of work.*

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# INTRODUCTION

## About the Guide

This is one of a series of easy-to-follow guides to help teachers prepare and run Inspiring the Future (ITF) activities at their school. They include suggestions for designing and running an activity, tips for inviting volunteers and encouraging them to accept requests and in some instances, sample activity tools and templates are provided for teachers to use or modify as needed.

## About the Inspiring the Future Campaign

Inspiring the Future (ITF) Australia is a national campaign to give every school student the opportunity to be inspired and motivated by volunteers from a wide range of occupations and industries at all levels. Workplace volunteers sign up on the ITF online platform where they create a personal profile including school regions they are willing to travel to on invitation. Teachers sign up online for free to search for and invite registered volunteers into their school to share their career story or help in other ways. ITF challenges gender stereotyping, broadens students' career horizons and helps to illustrate the relevance of their classroom studies to workplace applications. The more connections that school students have with people from the workplace, the better equipped they are to make informed decisions about their future study and career options and to gain meaningful employment. ITF expands the number of those connections, especially for students with limited role models, living in families experiencing intergenerational unemployment and other types of entrenched social disadvantage.

## Who we are

The Inspiring the Future Australia campaign is run by School Industry Partnership (SIP), an Australian not-for-profit organisation whose ultimate aim is to inspire young people to reach their full potential. The UK based Education & Employers charity licenses SIP to roll out ITF across Australia. SIP currently works with local delivery partners, NASSSA in Adelaide and AusSIP in Western Sydney. We're always looking for additional champions, recruiters, organisers, or other individuals who can help roll out ITF in their local region or help out behind the scenes! If you or your organisation has an interest in supporting or enhancing ITF we'd really love to hear from you.



## Child Protection Requirements

Student safety is paramount, so we ask that all volunteers agree to comply with any child protection requirements in their State or as asked by the school. This most commonly entails showing photo ID, filling out a simple form or getting a free volunteer working with children check. You can learn more about the requirements in your state at our FAQ page. ITF volunteers must be supervised by a teacher at all times while on school premises.



## Get involved as a teacher

Sign up as a teacher on the secure online platform [www.inspiringthefuture.org.au](http://www.inspiringthefuture.org.au) to connect with volunteers from a range of sectors, professions and experience who have indicated their willingness to visit schools in your region. Volunteers have signed up to share their knowledge, experience and enthusiasm about their jobs and experiences with your students.

You can invite them via the ITF platform come to your school to broaden your students' awareness of career options, engage their interest in the practical applications of their classroom learning and to generally enable them to make informed study and career decisions.

Although volunteers have indicated their willingness to take part in specific ITF activities, you are free to request their assistance with any other activity relevant to your students' learning needs. When you are inviting volunteers to take part in an activity at your school, it's advisable to provide them with at least three weeks' notice and to invite at least double the number of people you need. Volunteers often have busy schedules and may not always be available when you need them..

# Purpose of Inspiring Women Australia

By the age of 6, children classify jobs as male and female – by the age of 8, they are limiting aspirations and then by 13 many of them have already ruled out career options that don't fit with gender stereotypes.

It's clear that for girls and young women, it's 'who you know' that influences career aspirations and choice. They rely on female role models from a range of sectors, positions of responsibility and stages of their life to broaden their horizons and help to combat stereotypes about occupations. This is what Inspiring Women aims to do.

If you are looking to help pupils gain insights into different careers and broaden their aspirations, there are two popular activity options you could use:

1. The Panel Interviews activity
2. The more informal 'Speed Career Networking' activity

Both work well with inspiring women from a range of sectors and professions or within a specific economic sector. Feel free to design your own activities based on the needs of your students and perhaps on the needs of industry sectors/organisations that are keen to promote career pathways to young women.





# Easy Steps for Inspiring Women

## Running a Panel Interview activity

1. Select a date and time where you have 1 hour and a group of interested students to take part.
2. Log on to Inspiring the Future and invite 3-6 volunteers in the professions, specialisms or Send them details of the venue, timing and directions. Follow up one week before the event to re-confirm. We suggest you give volunteers at least 4 - 6 weeks' notice prior to your activity.
3. Have some students brainstorm questions they would like the panel speakers to answer. See Appendix A for samples. Refine them down to about a list of 5-6 that could be used for the activity. Assign 3-5 students to interview the panellists and divide the questions between them. Questions could be asked to specific guests, some or all of them (depending on how much time is available). Decide who will be the activity facilitator (most likely a teacher)
4. Set up chairs on the stage for the panellists and provide them with a mobile microphone if possible to share between them as required. (A long table is optional)

*Tip: Choose a broad topic or concept to focus the discussion around, this will help students come up with questions as well as help volunteers focus their examples and answers.*

5. It works well if the organising teacher reviews the ITF profile of each guest speaker or finds out more about them by email before they arrive. This enables the teacher and/or students to tailor certain questions for specific panellists.

Eg. "I understand that you had some challenging experiences when you left school. Can you tell us about that and how you dealt with them?"

6. The volunteers might appreciate knowing what type of questions they could be asked before they arrive so that they can be ready with their responses.

7. When volunteers arrive, welcome them at the school office and perhaps have one or two students guide them to their seats in the activity area.

8. The facilitator might have each guest introduce themselves by telling the audience what they do and their job role. If possible, the names and titles of each guest could be projected on a large screen behind the panel throughout the activity.

9. The students interviewing could sit in a row alongside the row of panellists or opposite them, taking turns to ask their questions. If time permits, the facilitator could ask for other questions from the audience.



10. At the conclusion, have a prepared student formally thank the guests for coming to their school, letting them know how much all the students appreciated their participation and how they were inspired etc. A warm vote of thanks and perhaps small gift for each volunteer always goes a long way towards encouraging their future participation with ITF.

## Activity follow-up

Let us know how it went – send us any pictures, videos and feedback to [online@inspiringthefuture.org.au](mailto:online@inspiringthefuture.org.au) so we can help to showcase and celebrate your success. You can also tag us on Twitter @ITF\_Australia and Facebook @InspiringtheFutureAU.

## 7 Easy Steps to Career Speed Networking

1. Select a date and time where you have 1 hour and a group of anywhere between 50-100 students to take part.

2. Log on to Inspiring the Future and invite volunteers in the professions, specialisms or areas (e.g. apprenticeships) you would like to see represented (ideally, one volunteer speaking to a group of 8-10 pupils); Send them details of the venue, timing and directions.

Follow up one week before the event to re-confirm. We suggest you give volunteers at least 4 - 6 weeks' notice prior to your event.

3. Prepare your students by going through sample questions they might want to ask as they are 'speed career dating' with the volunteers (see Appendix A & Appendix B for some examples).

4. Set up the tables so it is easy for the volunteers to rotate around the room while the pupils remain seated. If possible, label each table with a number, perhaps on restaurant table number stands.

5. When volunteers arrive, welcome them and ensure volunteers have the chance to ask you any questions they may have. Give them a short intro talk and then sit them down with the young people.

6. Rotate the volunteers around the tables every 8 - 10 minutes on a signal by the facilitator.

### Activity follow-up

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# Inspiring Women Resources

## Appendix A: Suggested student questions

Students will most likely have some questions in mind themselves but teachers can help prepare them in advance with practice runs. The following questions could be provided to students either prior to the activity or on the day itself.

### Sample Questions

- What was unexpected/a challenge you overcame when you began your career?
- Has your experience as a woman in your field changed in the past 5 years? What do you predict will happen in the next 5 to 10 years?
- What is the biggest challenge at the moment for a woman in the workplace?
- What are the most critical changes to thinking about careers that young women must make to face the future effectively?
- What or who has helped you get to where you are and what advice would you have for others who want to set off in a similar direction?
- What was your attitude like to school and how did it impact on your career journey?
- What do you wish you were told when you were at school regarding the world of work?
- What school subjects/learning best relate to your job today?
- How has technology and the speed of change affected jobs and employee roles in your industry?
- What study/career pathway did you take after leaving school?
- What did you want to be 'when you grew up' – did you fulfil this dream? How does this related to your role now, if not why not ?
- We all have everyday struggles – study, work, at home... what are yours at work?
- What opportunities for gender equality are there in your industry sector?
- What is a day in your job like... what do you do?
- Can you explain what traits you look for in future employees?
- What pathways should a student take to get a job role in your industry?
- What type of job roles are available that would be deemed as non-traditional gender roles?

## Appendix B: Speed Career Networking questions

You could use some of the Inspiring Women questions listed for the panel activity in Appendix A or the following questions prepared for generic Speed Career networking activities.



### Sample Questions

- Have you done different kinds of jobs before or is this the only sector in which you have worked?
- Have you found hobbies or activities outside of school teach you any useful skills for work?
- Do you manage other people/are you managed by someone else? What do you think makes a good manager?
- Is there anything you would do differently in your education/career path to this point?
- What are the biggest challenges for you at work?
- How does your job affect the rest of your daily life?
- What do you enjoy most about your job?
- Do you have to work with other people or do you mainly work alone?
- What advice would you give if you had a daughter my age?
- What can I do now to prepare me for this kind of career?
- What do you do?
- What skills/qualities do you need to do your job?
- What does a typical day/week look like at work?
- Is the job what you expected when you entered this industry?
- Why did you choose this career?
- What was your education/training route into this career?
- What did you learn in school that you find useful at work?
- Do you use languages/maths/science in your job at all?
- What is the salary range for this kind of work? Are there any other benefits?



*This guide has been prepared by*



*With any questions or to collaborate, contact*  
**Adrian Rhodes**, Director of Inspiring the Future

*adrian@inspiringthefuture.org.au*

**inspiring** the **future**.org.au