

FOR THE TEACHER:

Introduction

The purpose of this activity is to help students:

- identify and evaluate criteria that's important to them in potential employers
- learn more about local companies of interest

Setting the Stage

Discuss with students why it is important to research potential employers. The more they know about a company's services or products, values, and mission, the better able they will be to connect their skills, knowledge, and experience to the organization's goals and needs. Moreover, researching companies of interest will help prepare them for informational/job interviews and networking opportunities.

Ask students to brainstorm (in groups or alone) a list of details they must know about a company before deciding whether or not they want to work there. (You can direct students to the Work Search section of Career Cruising's Employment Guide where they'll find lots of information about researching employers.) As a class, discuss the results of their brainstorming session. Students should keep in mind the criteria that are important to them as they explore a company profile, website, and message board in Part B of the activity.

Note: Remind students to select a company that has a message board associated with it as they will have the opportunity to learn more about the company by posting questions to the board. The Summary – Your Opinion section of the worksheet cannot be completed until after students have received a response to the question they have posted on the Company Message Board. Students will have to return to this worksheet at a later date; however, it's an important step as it gives them a chance to reflect on the company representative's answer to their question and evaluate their interest in the company.

Extension Activity

Have students compose a general broadcast letter or a cover letter for one of the occupations listed in the Who We Hire section of the company profile. Review the basics of effective letter writing beforehand (you can use the information found in Career Cruising's Employment Guide). Students can click on the occupation links in the Who We Hire section to learn more about occupations, and research related job postings (either on the company website or an online job board) to find out what employers of people in that occupation look for when hiring. Remind them to include information that they have found about the company.

Starting the Program

Go to www.careercruising.com. Enter your username and password in the spaces provided, and click on Start Career Cruising.

Part A. What should I know about a potential employer?

Brainstorm a list of things that you need to know about a company before you decide whether or not you would like to work there. (e.g. *products and services the company offers, company values, management style, number of employees, etc.*)

Part B. Search for a company

Sign in to Career Cruising and click on the **NETWORK** button in the menu at the top of the page. Click on the Company Profiles link.

Search for companies by cluster. Select a company that you would like to investigate further. (Make sure the company profile has a Company Message Board associated with it by checking for a Company Message Board button on the profile.)

Company Name:

1. Read the Description & Details Section. Answer the following questions:

What does this company do?

What did you learn about this company's background?

What industry (or industries) does this company serve?

What career clusters does this company hire people in?

2. Click on the Who We Hire button in the menu on the left side of the page. This company employs people in what career areas? Which career areas interest you most?

3. Return to the Description & Details page of the company profile. Click on the link to the company's website and explore the site. (If the company does not have a website, see if you can find the information elsewhere online, such as a local BIA website.)

What else did you find out about the company's background? (*Hint: Look for an About Us, History, FAQ, or similar section*)

What else did you find out about the careers available at this company? (*Hint: Look for a Careers, Employment Opportunities, FAQ, or similar section.*)

Consult the list that you developed in Part A of this worksheet, and try to find the information that you indicated you wanted to know about a potential employer. Record your findings here:

What else do you want to know about this company? Write down three questions you would like to ask a representative about the company:

Post your question to the Company Message Board!

Return to the company profile page, and click on the **COMPANY MESSAGE BOARD** button in the menu on the left side of the page. Read through some of the questions that have been posted to the board. Choose one of the questions you developed to ask the company representative. (If your questions already appear, try to think of a new question or add to the related thread with a follow-up question.)

Click on the gray **ASK A QUESTION** button and follow the instructions.

Note: Your question will not show up on the board right away. Once a company representative has responded to your message, both your question and the reply will appear.

Summary – Your Views (To be completed after your question has been answered by a company representative.)

Summarize (put briefly into your own words) the company representative's response to your question:

How did the answer(s) provided by the company representative influence your opinion of the company?

What do you like about this company?

What do you dislike about this company?

Based on what you know about this company, would you like to work there? Why or why not?
