Explorers will visit a company or organization to learn more about their career.

ACTIVITY LIBRARY TAGS
- Exploring: Business, Communications, Engineering & Technology
- iTech Exploring: Required
- Life Skills: College & Career Prep, Leadership, Computer Literacy
- US DOE: Business Management & Administration, Information Technology, STEM

AGE APPROPRIATENESS
- Exploring Posts (14-20 years old)
- Exploring Clubs (10-14 years old)

OBJECTIVES
By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
- Identify career pathways in technology
- Organize and manage an event and/or visit
- Reflect on various career paths and opportunities for the future
- Interview professionals during mentoring session or shadow day

SUPPLIES
- **Site Visit Planning Checklist** (one per unit)
- **Pen/pencil and paper for notes** (one per Explorer)

LEADER NOTE: Text in italics should be read aloud to participants. As you engage your Exploring unit (club or post) in activities each week, please include comments, discussions, and feedback to the group relating to **Character, Leadership,** and **Ethics.** These are important attributes that make a difference in the success of youth in the workplace and in life.

ACTIVITIES
Activity 1 | Site Visit Structure

YOUTH LEADERSHIP POSITION: Site Visit Coordinators should lead their team through these activities. The position should rotate for each site visit so that multiple Explorers have the opportunity to organize a visit.

Explorers will visit local tech companies and/or IT Departments with the purpose of learning new career paths and hearing firsthand about professionals' experiences. It is important that Explorers are exposed to a variety of tech companies/departments, careers and career paths.

Site visits are an opportunity for Explorers to meet tech professionals, ask questions and participate in "shadow days." These visits will last between 1 - 2 hours. The Explorer that is in the leadership role of Site Visit Coordinator will work with the leader to plan the visit.

Objectives

The goal of these site visits is to:

- Expose Explorers to new careers and opportunities
- Demonstrate to Explorers the wide range of career paths in technology
- Connect Explorers with local tech organizations / departments
- Provide opportunities for Explorers to shadow tech professionals
- Facilitate mentorship opportunities for Explorers
- Provide Explorers with space to ask questions and receive feedback on projects

Visit Structure

Explorers should research tech-related companies that would be a good fit for Explorers to visit during their program. Once the company is determined and scheduled, leaders will guide the Site Visit Coordinator through the logistics and coordination process about 2-3 weeks prior to the scheduled visit date. Refer to the **Site Visit Planning Checklist**. Leaders should lead Explorers through a guided discussion of the following options for each site visit:

1. Company Tour: Explorers tour the company and ask questions about work life.

2. Shadow Day: Explorers break into groups and shadow a tech professional at the company. The professional will walk through "a day in the life" and answer questions.

3. Small Group Mentoring:Explorers will break into small groups and partner with a tech professional for mentoring sessions. Explorers can ask questions to better understand their mentor's role.

4. Feedback Session: When Explorers are in the midst of their project, use the tech company visits as a feedback session. Tech professionals at the company can provide user feedback and help Explorers improve their project.

Feel free to schedule multiple visits to the same tech company or IT Department. Visiting the same site twice (or more) allows Explorers to develop professional relationships with experienced individuals in technology and reinforce Explorers' passion for technology

Activity 2 | Site Visit Preparation

One Month Prior

The Site Visit Coordinator should brainstorm with their peers to determine possible sites to visit and select one of the four format options (listed above) for the site visit. Understand the company's structure and availability to help determine the best option for the visit.

One Week Prior

The Site Visit Coordinator should finalize details for the visit with their leader and the contact person at the site. Explorers and leaders should work with the company to pick the best structure based on the site's schedule and availability. Ask Explorers to brainstorm questions and research the company.

LEADER NOTE

If your visit includes a Mentoring or Feedback Session, ask Explorers to prepare specific questions around their mentor or project.

Remind Explorers to make the best use of this time and discuss why advanced preparation is important. Below are suggestions to spark conversation if Explorers need additional prompting:

- *Why do you like working at [company name]?*
- *What is your favorite part about your job?*
- *How did you get into your career / field?*
- *What is the hardest part about your job?*
- *What was the best project you worked on? Why?*
- *How do you tackle a challenge you've never faced?*
- *How have you handled failure in your role?*
- *Do you work on side projects at home? What types of projects?*
- *Who is your role model in the tech world?*
- *What advice would you give to an Explorer that's just starting to learn?*

Day of Site Visit
Discuss the purpose of the site visit and how it relates to your program. Review the visit agenda with the Site Visit Coordinator. See **Site Visit Planning Checklist** for reference.

After Site Visit
Spend 15 minutes with Explorers. The Site Visit Coordinator should lead the group and ask reflection questions (refer to below as an example). It's important for Explorers to reflect on what they learned and how to apply their experience to their own journey. Explorers will reflect individually with a prompt or Leaders can facilitate group discussions (see reflection questions).

REFLECTION
- *What did you enjoy about this visit?*
- *What is one thing you learned from the company or tech professional?*
- *What did you think about [tech professional]'s career? What did you like / dislike?*
- *What observations did you make about their company culture and work environment?*
- *What were your biggest takeaways from this visit?*
- *What did you like most about this company? What did you dislike? Why?*
- *How can we apply what we learned to our projects?*
- *How does this visit relate to our current program?*
- *How does this company differ from [last company visit]? Which did you like more? Why?*

Content for this session provided by Kiwi Compute (www.kiwicompute.com).

RESOURCES
Activity 1: Site Visit Planning Checklist

The goal of the site visits is two-fold:

1. Encourage Explorers to make the connection between technology careers and community benefits.
2. Provide Explorers with event planning and coordinating experience.

Review the below checklists with the Site Visit Coordinator to ensure that all items are complete.

One – Two Months in Advance
- ☐ Confirm date / time with company
- ☐ Finalize Site Visit structure and provide details to company
- ☐ Determine if any materials are needed in advance

One Week in Advance
- ☐ Arrange for meal/snack if needed
- ☐ Develop schedule for the site visit
- ☐ Arrange for special equipment or supplies if needed (computers, notebooks, etc.)
- ☐ Prepare name tags for Explorers and chaperones
- ☐ Obtain parent permission for Explorer participation. Send a letter home including:
- ☐ Include the standard Exploring Parent Consent form found at the Exploring Website
- ☐ Date and location of site visit
- ☐ Transportation arrangements
- ☐ Educational purpose of visit
- ☐ Clothing for the trip (Explorers may need to wear business casual)
- ☐ Food arrangements if necessary
- ☐ Complete itinerary
- ☐ Provide Explorers with company overview
- ☐ Explorers should spend 30 mins researching the organization and preparing questions

Day of Site Visit
- ☐ Take attendance and confirm that all students are present
- ☐ Distribute name tags to Explorers and chaperones
- ☐ Remind Explorers of the purpose of the visit and review company information
- ☐ Encourage Explorers to ask questions and make observations throughout the visit

After Site Visit
- ☐ Explorers should spend 15 minutes reflecting on the visit
- ☐ Send a thank you note to the company - ask an Explorer to lead this
- ☐ As a Leader, evaluate what went well and what could be improved