



An Ag Interview

Grades 9-10

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Agriculture in the Classroom

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California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom

Vision: An appreciation of agriculture by all.

Mission: To increase awareness and understanding of agriculture among California's educators and students.



California Foundation for
Agriculture in the Classroom

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An Ag Interview

Purpose

In this lesson, students will gain a greater awareness of the role agriculture plays in the American economy, practice oral and written communication skills, and learn about numerous agricultural careers.

Time

One class period to introduce the assignment.

Two to three weeks to set up appointments and conduct interviews.

Two class periods to report findings.

Materials

For the class:

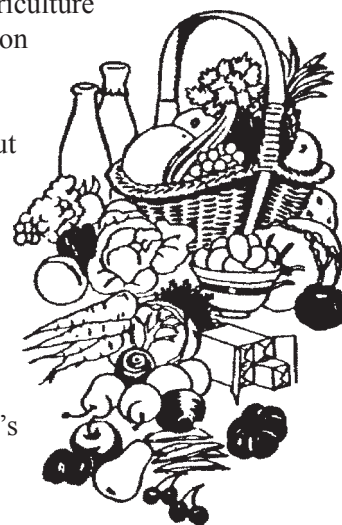
- A list of potential people for students to interview or potential contacts for locating interviewees (See page 9)

For each student:

- *An Agricultural Interview* worksheets

Procedure

1. Discuss the importance of agriculture in our state and nation. Statistics can be obtained from various resources and Web sites listed in the back of this lesson. Possible key points may include:
 - California is the leading agricultural state in the nation.
 - California's leading industry is agriculture with a total value of over \$27 billion annually.
 - California produces almost one out of every five glasses of milk consumed in the nation.
 - California's leading commodities include milk and cream, grapes, nursery products, and lettuce.
 - In 2000, almonds were California's leading export with the top destinations being Canada and Japan.
 - In the United States less than two percent of the population is involved in production agriculture.
 - The import and export agricultural trade is complex and affects the economy of our nation.
2. Discuss the goals of the assignment with your students. Prior to this discussion you should have reviewed the purpose of the lesson and the content standards emphasized. Revise the lesson to meet the needs of your students. When appropriate, discuss and role-play how one should and should not act during an interview.
3. Inform the students that they will work in teams of two and are responsible for the following:
 - Identifying an owner or manager of farm, ranch, or agribusiness that they will interview.
 - Obtain the basic information on the company and person to be interviewed and complete the appropriate section of the interview sheet.



An Ag Interview

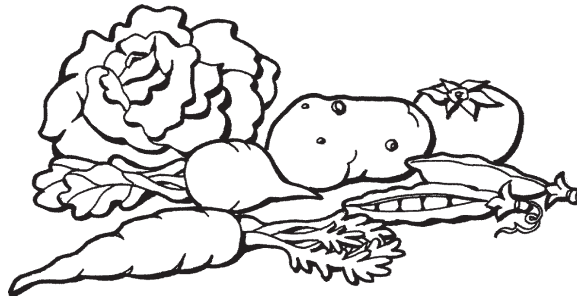
Content Standards

Grades 9-10

Reading/Language Arts

Writing • 1.0, 1.6, 1.9
Written and Oral Language
Conventions • 1.0, 1.3,
1.4
Listening and Speaking
2.3

- Set up an interview time and location.
 - As a team, determine whether the interview questions need to be altered and write several questions they wish to ask the person.
 - Upon arrival, the students should provide a brief greeting and introduction and then conduct the formal interview.
4. Allow two or three weeks for students to conduct interviews. Distribute a clean copy of the interview sheet to recopy their work and/or have the students write a summary of what they learned about the person they interviewed and what they learned about agriculture
 5. Have each team present their findings to the class.
 6. Have the students write thank you letters to the people they interviewed. Perhaps the school can provide envelopes and postage.



An Agricultural Interview



Names of Interviewers _____

Instructions

1. Schedule an appointment for an interview with a local farmer, farm manager, or an owner or manager of a farm-related business. (You *may not* interview an immediate family member.)
2. Before your interview, familiarize yourselves with the operation as best you can. Request flyers or Web site addresses that will give you information about the operation. Learn about the commodities that this person/company produces. This will make your interview more meaningful.
3. The interview must take place at the business site. Obtain accurate directions, and secure a responsible method of transportation. Be sure to complete the *Pre-Interview Information* prior to your arrival at the interview site.
4. One or two days prior to the interview, call and confirm your appointment.
5. This completed form is due on _____. Recopy and/or write a summary about your findings, as instructed by your teacher. Proof your work for proper spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Be prepared to discuss your interview with your classmates.

Pre-Interview Information

Name of farmer or person to be interviewed _____

This person's title _____

Name of farm or agriculture-related business _____

Address of farm or business _____

Business phone number(s) _____

E-mail address and/or Web site _____

Date and time of interview _____

Telephone number of farm or firm _____

Date and time of interview _____

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Interview Questions

1. Describe the nature of your farm or business: _____

2. Type of business: Sole Proprietorship Partnership Corporation
3. Years at present business: _____
4. Number of employees: _____. Salaried Hourly
If paid hourly, how much do the employees earn per hour? _____
5. Approximate hours you work per week: _____
6. Do you have seasonal employees? Yes No. If so, how many? _____
7. Do you have more full-time or seasonal employees? Full-time Seasonal
8. What qualities do you look for when hiring employees?

9. Have you found owners of similar businesses to be friendly? Competitive? Explain.

10. Why did you select this particular business to go into?

An Agricultural Interview *(page 3)*

11. How did you determine the location of your business?
12. What would you do differently if you were to start a new business this year?
13. How do you promote your business or products?
14. Discuss the sale of your commodities. Who do you sell to? How is the price determined?
15. What do you do to make your profit margin the best it can be?
16. In general, how do you feel about subsidies for farmers?

An Agricultural Interview *(page 4)*

17. Discuss the use of various chemicals in your operation. Why are they used? What precautions are taken? What regulations must be followed?

18. What kind of sustainable agricultural practices do you incorporate into your work?

19. Describe two unique features of your business:

a.

b.

20. What is most rewarding about your career?

21. What is the biggest challenge in operating your business?

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22. What prepared you to be a farmer, owner or employee of an agricultural-related business?

23. What is one political issue you are concerned about?

Two additional questions:

24. Question:

Answer:

25. Question:

Answer:

An Agricultural Interview

After the Interview

In a well-written essay, discuss what you learned from the interview. Proof your essay and make sure there is a logical sequence of thought as well as proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Site examples from your interview in your writing. You may choose to include information that answers the following questions:

- What was your first impression of the person you interviewed and the facility at which you performed the interview?
- Does the person you interviewed seem to enjoy his/her occupation?
- Does the person you interviewed have a passion for agriculture?
- Summarize your impression of the strengths and weaknesses of this particular business?
- What are some specific challenges that were addressed?
- How did your first impressions change after interviewing the agriculturist?
- Would you be interested in this type of job or career? Why/Why not?

Extensions

- Tour the farm or business and write a summary of what you saw and learned.
- Make a photo gallery or PowerPoint presentation of your experience.
- Interview another employee of the same operation and compare and contrast the information you obtain.

Teacher Resources and References

California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom

Provides a variety of programs and resources, which can increase the understanding of agriculture and its impact in today's world. A *Teacher Resource Guide* is available which lists a variety of Web sites and county contacts, which can be used to identify potential interviewees and obtain background information.

California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom
2300 River Plaza Drive
Sacramento, CA 95833
(800) 700-2482
Fax: (916) 561-5697
E-mail: cfaitc@cfbf.com
Web site: www.cfaitc.org

California Farm Bureau Federation

This organization has a variety of references and resources about agriculture. Information on specific commodities and counties is available on its Web site.

California Farm Bureau Federation
2300 River Plaza Drive
Sacramento, CA 95833
(916) 561-5500
Web site: www.cfbf.com



California Department of Food and Agriculture

This governmental agency has a variety of information on California agriculture. Statistics and other facts are available from various divisions of this agency.

California Department of Food and Agriculture
1220 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 654-0462
Fax: (916) 657-4240
Web site: www.cdfa.ca.gov

Think About It

This booklet describes the careers in agribusiness and related agricultural fields.

National FFA Organization
600 FFA Drive
Post Office Box 68960
Indianapolis, IN 46268-0960
(317) 802-4334
Fax: (317) 802-5334
E-mail: jarmbruster@ffa.org
Web site: www.ffa.org

Content Standard Details

Content Standards for California Public Schools Addressed in *An Ag Interview**

Obtained from the California Department of Education

Grades 9-10	
Standard	Standard Description
Reading/Language Arts	
Writing 1.0	Students write coherent and focused essays that convey a well-defined perspective and tightly reasoned argument. The writing demonstrates the students' awareness of the audience and purpose. Students progress through the stages of the writing process as needed.
Writing 1.6	Students will integrate quotations and citations into a written text while maintaining the flow of ideas.
Writing 1.9	Students revise writing to improve the logic and coherence of the organization and controlling perspective, the precision of word choice, and the tone by taking into consideration the audience, purpose, and formality of the context.
Written and Oral Language Conventions 1.0	Students write and speak with a command of standard English conventions.
Written and Oral Language Conventions 1.3	Students demonstrate an understanding of proper English usage and control of grammar, paragraph and sentence structure, diction, and syntax.
Written and Oral Language Conventions 1.4	Students produce legible work that shows accurate spelling and correct use of the conventions of punctuation and capitalization.
Listening and Speaking 2.3	Apply appropriate interviewing techniques including preparing and asking relevant questions; making notes of responses; using language that conveys maturity, sensitivity, and respect; responding correctly and effectively to questions; demonstrating knowledge of the subject or organization; and compiling and reporting responses.

* For a complete listing of the Content Standards for California Public Schools, contact CDE Press, Sales Office, California Department of Education, Post Office Box 271, Sacramento, CA 95812-0271; (916) 445-1260, www.cde.ca.gov.