

Survival Tips for the Upper Grades

**If you're not prepared, or think you can bluff,
these kids will put you on the spot.**

*In Jr. High and High School
Teachers are now specialists in a subject area.
You better know the opinion of the teacher
about your subject and your industry.*

Don't go to a government class to discuss your community's land use laws or the revision to federal environmental regulations, unless you've read and understand them. Because these kids will have read and analyzed the regulations and the law in preparing for your visit.

Grades 7, 8, & 9

Students are aged 12 to 15—life is changing for them.

- Emotional and eager to get moving.
- 7th & 8th Graders don't really think or plan ahead.
- Like to work in small groups and like “doing” activities.
- Haven't had extensive or detailed work in the science areas.
- Have basic math skills, and are beginning to get into algebra and geometry.
- Easily bored and have a vulnerable ego. Tend to be very self-conscious, easily embarrassed.
- 9th Graders are beginning to see the importance of school and relationship to a career choice.

It's okay to go into an AP biology class that has just learned the ins and outs of Agarose Gel Electrophoresis and discuss the benefits of slender wheat grass in land reclamation. Not everything has to be esoteric.

Look at the size of the textbook the class is using. More often than not, the students feel as if they are being fed with a fire hose. And they're right. Remember, the class you are in is only one of 4 or 5 they take, every day.

Grades 10, 11, & 12

Students are 15 and older—able to drive, vote, and go to war. Respect them.

- Mature learners, especially by the 12th grade.
- Expanding their understanding of ethical principles but don't yet realize the full impact of their words and actions.
- Have more experiences to help formulate questions and can visualize cause and effect presentations.
- Beginning to plan for career choices and training beyond high school.
- Higher degree of self-confidence. Respond well in group discussions.
- Can make connections between various subjects and content areas and life experiences.
- Are able to understand abstract concepts, but still like hands-on activities.
- There is a vast difference between 10th and 12th grade students in maturity and learning experiences.

Careers and Jobs are the secret to being invited & being successful.

The new national education standards emphasize jobs after school. This is the area in which you are the expert—the students know it and so does the teacher. If you want instant attention:

- tell them how much money the different skilled jobs pay at your company. Students are used to minimum wage jobs, because that's all they've had.
- tell them about the special skills, training, and education it takes to get a job like yours, trying to spur them on to more education and training.
- relate your job, your company, your industry to the economy of your community, the state, nation, and the world.