

Operation Minerva Job-shadowing: Mentor Guidelines and Suggestions

From www.awsn.com/operationminerva

The following are important points to think about when planning your job-shadowing day. We hope they help you get off to a good start. The participating girls and mentors are randomly matched. If possible, we want the girls to interact with several women in different areas for a broader knowledge base when course and career choice is more imminent. You are providing a positive role model for all women in science, math and related fields.

1. Starting the day

Introduce yourselves and clarify names and titles and find out a little about the girls. Perhaps you could distribute name tags if students will be meeting several people throughout the day. Please provide them with business cards to facilitate thank-you letters.

Briefly outline the day - i.e. the schedule, planned activities, your expectations, lunch (are you taking them out or will you eat lunch with them? where?), and including when they have to be ready to go meet the bus. Is there anything else they should know to feel comfortable and prepared for this new experience?

2. Nature of the activities

The key elements of success include a variety of activities, meaningful involvement, active participation and engaging discussion. Please treat your mentees as critical thinking young people (not children) and challenge them to think and ask probing questions. They will meet and perhaps surpass your expectations.

The activities should be as concrete, active and hands-on as you can make them. Involve equipment or relevant technology if possible. Try and let them “play the role.” Please feel free to call the coordinator if you would like to ‘bounce ideas’ or ask for advice regarding suitable activities.

Be careful of information overload, especially in the form of direct lecture and video (max 10-12 minutes at any one time).

Do show your average day including routines. Remember that this is a new experience for them and that aspects of your job that you consider very basic may be very interesting to your mentees. You will be able to judge how much detail is enough by their faces, body language and attention span.

3. Suggestions for conversation

- Your personal story such as your inspiration to pursue career, choices you made, personal experiences, support networks, your own mentors, and obstacles.
- Qualifications for your job(s), schooling (especially high school courses in mathematics, science & IT), further education, training, summer jobs, salary range, holidays and chances for promotion etc.
- Be careful to present a balanced and positive view of women in technological jobs. Where do you see your profession going in the future? Exciting new areas.
- Ask them what interests them and what career(s) they’ve considered.
- Encourage your mentees to write an essay about their Operation Minerva job-shadowing experience after they get home. Winning essay writers could win monetary prizes of \$50, \$30 and \$20. Please note that we require them to submit their essay with a photo.