

## **Grade 8 Informational**

### **Go for a Spin at a Job Fair**

A job fair is something that jobseekers— especially recent graduates – might find daunting. Is it like a typical job interview? What do I bring? How do I behave?

It's easy to feel lost in a sea of other potential hires, but sticking to a few guidelines can provide optimal success in such an overwhelming atmosphere. Here's how.

#### **BE PREPARED**

There's nothing worse than showing up to an interview unprepared. The same can be said of a job fair.

"It helps if candidates do research on the companies before a job fair and sound knowledgeable when they hand over a crisp copy of their resume," said Rebecca Mazin, co-founder of Recruit Right, a human-resources consulting firm.

Bring multiple copies of your resume, personal business cards, pens and a notebook to jot down the companies that catch your eye. Have a portfolio? Bring it along. This is an opportunity to show prospective bosses everything that you are as a professional.

#### **COME WITH A CLEAN SLATE**

Make sure to maintain a sense of professionalism before even setting foot in the fair. Making sure your online persona is respectable is a good start.

"Have a voicemail, email and Facebook presence that are professional and that you wouldn't be embarrassed to show an employer," said Jennifer Halperin, an internship coordinator at Columbia College in Chicago.

#### **LOOK YOUR BEST**

"Dress for success" may sound like a hokey term, but it should be a priority at a job fair.

"I would be more likely to hire someone if they were dressed appropriately, and not provocatively," Halperin said.

Keep skirts long enough, shirts wrinkle-free and avoid denim jeans.

#### **DON'T BE GREEDY**

Job fairs often are overflowing with free product emblazoned with logos: pens, water bottles, lanyards, posters, even chewing gum. According to a study from the Advertising Specialty Institute, 56 percent of responding human resources professionals say promotional products imprinted with a company's name convey a positive image when distributed at job fairs.

But being greedy and loading up on multiple items can make you appear overzealous and unprofessional. Take a pen or perhaps a poster. Then wait for a company representative to invite you to help yourself.

And remember to say thank you.

## Grade 8 Narrative

### Sky's the Limit

Jordan lay flat on his back, clutching his skateboard to his chest, the board's wheels facing upward and spinning wildly. He thought to himself: Nothing hurts. I landed safely on the grass, and I'm OK. His heart raced with the adrenaline of exhilaration, instinctively revving, unable to detect the difference between survival mode and celebration. For one seemingly endless moment, Jordan's existence consisted of a deep, tranquil silence underscored by the rhythm of his heightened heartbeats. He gazed up at the sky overhead, absorbed by the great stillness of the clouds and the thought that how strange that such a sky would be called *altocumulus mackerel*.

Then his sister's voice reached up and snatched him from the clouds and the sky and the memories of the past, yanking him unceremoniously back to the present.

"You really think you're something, don't you?" were the words, but Julianna's tone conveyed an almost parental pride.

A multitude of faces stared down at him; he heard not only Julianna's voice, but a chorus of voices, all speaking at once, unintelligibly, words blending together and cresting like the roar of the waves crashing on the shore:

"He's in shock."

"Concussion."

"Oh, right, when did you become a doctor?"

"At least he didn't break anything."

"How would you know?"

"He's a doctor, remember? He diagnosed the concussion."

"Look, he's trying to get up."

As Jordan tentatively hoisted himself to a sitting position, the voices gradually stilled, the faces anxiously watching, the anxiety apparent and yet so strange to Jordan until he understood the silence stemmed from worry: they assumed he was hurt. "I'm fine," he said, but his words did nothing to reassure them; having seen the landing, they had made up their minds.

"Maybe you shouldn't get up," said a girl in a black T-shirt.

“How many fingers am I holding up?” asked the guy who thought he was a doctor. Undeterred by Jordan’s indifference, he continued. “Hey, that was some fall.”

“It wasn’t a fall,” corrected Julianna, who had observed him more closely than anyone. “He was in control the whole time.”

“Maybe he broke something,” offered someone else, one of those who was clearly and understandably enjoying the drama of the spectacle.

Jordan’s respiration and heart rate had returned to normal, or as close as could be expected under the circumstances. Standing up casually cost him both effort and concentration—the temptation was to stay there, in that place of *altocumulus mackerel* sky, soaring, exhilarated, and more alive than he had ever been. The endless hours of slowly rolling, painstakingly rehearsing on the ground what he longed to achieve in the air, stepping backward into a rotation, wheels clacking awkwardly on the pavement, had finally lifted him up to the sky. He managed to appear just the same as always, with no indication that anything unusual had happened, as he picked up his board. Jordan glanced back at the ramp, trying to recapture the moment, but the moment vanished, evanescent as the clouds now drifting away.

“He’s fine,” said Julianna dismissively.

“That was incredible,” he heard someone else say. “At least two complete rotations!”

“More like a McTwist,” said the girl in the black T-shirt.

“That was some landing,” said the guy, who, like many who watch too many television doctors, somehow had gained the illusion that he had medical credentials. “Lucky you ended up on the grass.”

Staring at the ramp, Jordan assembled fleeting snatches of memory as brief scenes appeared and then disappeared like pictures in an accelerated slideshow: checking his helmet straps, adjusting his kneepads, testing wheel bearings before rolling up to the vertical ramp, then assessing its curve and steepness, preparing as he had millions of times before for yet another attempt at a Caballeria—a backward 360-degree turn, a maneuver he’d been practicing for ages, ever since Julianna taught him how to do it.

At that moment, those countless repetitions of movements merged and coalesced; immediately before releasing himself to gravity, Jordan visualized the exuberant arc of a dolphin, the heartbreakingly graceful swoop of the hawk, and then he, too, was soaring, effortlessly spinning in what seemed to be slow motion. Then the downward spiral as he caught the board under his feet mid-air and landed, sure-footed and solid, only to collapse in sheer amazement and disbelief in the grass.

“That wasn’t luck; that was intentional,” countered Jordan absentmindedly.

“Good one,” said the girl in the black T-shirt, and Jordan nodded in acknowledgment, seemingly nonchalant, but grinning inwardly.

“What’s next?” asked Julianna, as they navigated their way through the crowd.

Jordan shrugged. “Sky’s the limit.”