

IGNITE Panelist Training Guide

At every Panel, the facilitator will start by introducing IGNITE and providing background information about gender diversity in STEM. Next, the Lead Panelist will ask the following questions and answer each one briefly, then ask each Panelist to respond one at a time, incorporating 1-2 physical visual aids throughout (see [IGNITE Visual Aid Guide](#) for examples).

Your response to each question should take no more than 60 seconds. The second half of the panel is an interactive Q&A discussion with the students.

Prepare Your Responses

1. **Let's start by all introducing ourselves with our name, job title, and company (optional: include your pronouns).**
2. **Now, let's each share what we do at work day to day. What do you like most about your job?** Give a brief description of what your job looks like day to day in simple language. Think of the stereotypes that exist around your field (e.g. all Computer Scientists act like stereotyped characters seen on TV, STEM is all about coding, etc) and emphasize the different reality you've experienced. **(60 seconds)** *Tip: use a visual aid! Share your workspace, uniform, a tool you use at work, or a project or product you've worked on*
3. **The students here today are {age range for your event}, so let's all share a bit about what we were like at that age. What were everyone's favorite subjects or hobbies? How did you all become interested in your work or STEM in general? (60 seconds)**
4. **What educational/academic or other choices did you make to lead to your career?** Why would you suggest that students take STEM classes at school now? **(60 seconds)** *Tip: use a visual aid! Share a photo of yourself when you were around the students' age, and/or a childhood momento,*

Optional Questions

5. **What challenges did you face to get to your current position? Were there any allies who supported you?** Your experience inspires IGNITE students to find success despite the struggles they may face. Share about obstacles you have overcome to get where you are today and some useful ways you and others navigate gender and/or racial inequities and work to create a more just workplace. Don't be afraid to be honest here; authenticity helps students relate! **(45 seconds)**
6. **Why did you choose to come speak with students today?** Why do you care that they know about STEM careers? **(30 seconds)**

Reminders & Tips

- IGNITE is designed as a space for girls and gender-diverse students; students may not all identify as female. Please don't assume pronouns when addressing students. When in doubt, use they/them, general references like "your classmate", or clothing-based identifying details ("the student in the back with the red shirt")
- Be aware of gendered language, ie. "You Guys" and "Ladies." Instead, use inclusive terminology like "You All."
- Practice, practice, practice! *Tip: If you have a young person in your life, you can use them as a practice partner to make sure your responses are engaging and age-appropriate.*
- Bring [1-2 visual aids](#) related to your story. For in-person panels, pass visual aids around so students can interact with them.
- During the student Q&A, keep your responses short (about 30 seconds). Listen to others and avoid repeating similar answers or comments; we want the students to hear as many perspectives as possible!

- Remember you are talking to kids, so be sure to explain technical words or acronyms.
- Keep it PG! This is a professional event; please use student-appropriate language with no swearing.
- Speak slowly and clearly and look around the room at students. *Tip: If there is a translator, pause between sentences to allow time for translation.*
- Be energetic and approachable! Especially for young students, sitting still for an extended time can be challenging. Your energy goes a long way toward keeping them engaged.
- Be positive! It's good to share that school was hard or life had challenges, but focus on the lessons learned and growth that came from those experiences.
- Encourage students to take technical classes and seek out STEM activities that will help develop technical skills, as well as opportunities to build soft skills, like drama to help with public speaking.
- For students in grades 8 and below, focus on their immediate future (school/extracurricular, not college/career).
- To invite students to interact with you, ask relevant questions during your share that students can raise their hands or shout out responses to. Examples:
 - I work at {{e-commerce company}}, raise your hand if you've received a package from us!
 - Working in STEM allows me to take vacations, shout out where you'd go on vacation!
 - I was born in {{state/country}}. Has anyone been there? Did anyone else move far from home in your childhood?"
- Remember that you're entering a school environment and disruptions may occur. If there are any disruptions that detract from your experience, please don't hesitate to let us know.
- Please bring anything you need to feel comfortable during your event (water, snacks, etc)

Specific to Virtual Panels:

- Make sure your Zoom background is professional. Download an [IGNITE background!](#)
- Ensure your internet connection is strong and secure, and test your mic and webcam in advance.
- Be present! Block out the full event time on your calendar to limit the possibility of interruptions or distractions.
- Before you log in, please make sure your Zoom name is your first and last name so our host knows to let you in.
- Make eye contact by looking at your camera when speaking.
- During the "lightning round," at the end of your event, prepare to briefly share something you wish you knew at the students' age in 1-2 sentences.
- We invite students to turn on their webcams, but please note that some may decide to keep their cameras off.
- To protect student privacy, do not take any screenshots or recordings during your event.

The IGNITE Worldwide Program is intentionally designed to create a space for girls and gender-diverse students to learn about STEM topics, skills, and careers, and allow them to see themselves represented in STEM. Many IGNITE Students come from BIPOC communities, and many attend Title 1 Schools, which is a federal education program that supports low income students. We encourage panelists and volunteers who can personally identify with IGNITE Students. If you have questions or concerns about volunteer opportunities with IGNITE, please reach out to us at contactus@ignite-worldwide.org.