

BestPrep's eMentors Guiding Question Topics®

Guiding Question topics provide the content for the student-mentor weekly message exchanges. The prompts provide guidance and direction for each message exchange. As with all relationships, students are also encouraged to write about more than the main prompt such as hobbies, interests, and how they spend their time.

Educator Instructions

1. Select seven guiding question topics using categories and prompts on the following pages.
2. Complete the grid below, place in order of when each message will be sent by students.
3. Send list to your BestPrep staff member. Copy/pasting the grid into an email message will work.

	Date message will be sent by students to mentors <i>Example: Tuesday, 10/28/24</i> Note the schedule may shift due to virtual activities.	Category <i>Example: Career Skills</i>	Guiding Question Title One per week/box <i>Example: Workplace Communications</i>
1			
2			
3			
4			
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7			

Main Categories and Topics

Below are the main categories that guiding questions fall within. Press ctrl and click on a category title to jump to the respective section to review all topics available. Teachers are encouraged to select from multiple categories.

<u>Introduction</u> Intro, high level career, post-secondary experience	<u>Choose Your Attitude</u> Teamwork, problem solving, creativity, positive attitude	<u>Career Exploration</u> Resumes, corporate culture, interview advice, networking
<u>Career Skills</u> Workplace communications, managing time, attendance	<u>Influences Global & Local</u> Role models, workplace diversity, travel experience, volunteering	<u>Academic Prep</u> Study skills, reading, life-long learning
<u>College Preparation</u> College visits, paying for school, college experience	<u>Business</u> Marketing, CPA, project management	<u>Economics</u> Inflation, monetary policy, international trade
<u>Science, Tech, & Math</u> careers, technology, math used at work, at home, displaying data	<u>Health & Wellness</u> Healthy lifestyle, careers in healthcare	<u>Customize a Guiding Topic</u> Don't see a guiding topic that works? Create your own.
<u>eMentors for AVID*</u> Full 7 weeks of questions related to the AVID program.	<u>eMentors for Financial Literacy*</u> Full 7 weeks of questions related to personal finance.	<u>eMentors for STEM*</u> Full 7 weeks of questions related to STEM.
<u>9th Grade Pathway</u>		

Full 7 weeks of questions related to 9 th grade mentorship		
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**eMentors for AVID/Personal Financial/STEM are ready-to-use guiding question lists for specific types of classes. Teachers are also welcome to select individual guiding questions from these lists.*

Introduction

Introduction: Introduce yourself by giving your name, pronouns, grade, classes in school, and any teams or extracurricular activities you are part of. Share a few of your favorites, such as your favorite subject, or how you spend your time. Ask your mentor about their job, what their daily tasks include, and how long they have been in the job. You can also ask your mentor about their family or hobbies.

Introductions with College/Career Experience: Introduce yourself by sharing your name, pronouns, grade, classes in school, extracurricular activities, work, volunteer experiences, etc. Share a few of your favorites, such as favorite subject or how you spend your time. Ask your mentor about their job, what their daily tasks include, and what they like best/least about their jobs. In addition, ask mentors about their education and training after high school. Looking back, what did the eMentor like most about these experiences and what do they wish they could have changed about the high school or college choices and experiences? You can also ask about their family or hobbies.

Get-to-Know-Me Slideshows: Create an "All About Me" slideshow using the template your teacher gave you. Remember to update each slide with your own photos and details. Attach your slideshow to the eMentors Messaging Portal. Ask your mentor to send you their "All About Me" slideshow.

Choose Your Attitude

Getting Along with Other Students, Co-Workers & Impressing Your Supervisor: Write about your experience getting along with students, co-workers and supervisors. Is it easy or hard for you? Explain any reasons you think your experiences were positive or negative. Ask your mentor to describe what they think are the best strategies for getting along with co-workers and impressing the boss. Have them share examples of situations in which they have dealt with both helpful and problematic co-workers and supervisors.

Growth Mindset: According to renowned psychologist Carol Dweck, a growth mindset is the belief that intelligence can be developed. This means you can gain new knowledge and skills through hard work, perseverance, and help from others when needed. It means you see failure as an opportunity to grow and you aren't afraid to try new things. Do you think you have a growth mindset? What are some ways you can practice having a growth mindset?

Conflict Resolution: Describe a conflict you have encountered with a classmate, family member, coworker, or friend. How was the conflict resolved? Ask your mentor how they resolve conflicts at work. How often do conflicts arise?

Teamwork: Tell your mentor about the teams you are on. Explain to your mentor how working with others on an assigned class project is like a team. Ask your mentor how often their job requires working in a team, and how often the mentor gets to choose who they work with. What does your mentor do when they can't solve a problem themselves? In what ways does your mentor collaborate with peers or adults to solve a problem or achieve a goal? How have you done this in your life?

Overcoming Mistakes: Tell your mentor about a mistake you have made. [Some examples could include cheating on a test, getting a bad grade in a class, lying to a friend, making someone feel bad, getting in a fight with someone, etc.] Tell your mentor how the situation was resolved. Is there anything positive that came out of the situation? Ask your mentor for strategies to overcome the mistakes and how to move on from a bad situation.

Problem Solving: How do you solve a problem? Identify some of the problems you have to solve at school. Ask your mentor what problems they have to solve at work. How do they decide what to do? Does your mentor break a big problem into small pieces? Are company policies written about problem solving? Is there anyone that your mentor reaches out to when a problem arises?

Ethics: There are times when all people are put into situations where a decision needs to be made. Making a conscientious ethical decision can be difficult. Describe a situation where you were forced to make an ethical choice, how you made the decision and how you knew it was correct. If you haven't been in this situation, you may want to share with your mentor a situation you witnessed at school or work. An example could be someone cheating on a test, skipping classes, bullying, or stealing. Tell your mentor how you felt about the situation. Ask your mentor to share a time when they saw a colleague make an ethical decision, and another time when someone made an unethical decision and the results of both.

Your Best Self: What is the best version of yourself? Consider what you say, how you treat others, how you use your time, and the goals you wish to achieve in all areas of your life. What are some steps you could take to be the best version of yourself every day? Ask your mentor to describe their best self and how they work to live this version each day.

Personal Brand: Use one to three words to describe yourself. Ask your mentor to do the same. Each person has a personal brand; how they present and represent themselves makes up their unique brand. Ask your mentor what image they want their manager to picture in their head when someone asks about them. Ask your mentor for tips on how to have a brand that is admirable by supervisors, friends, teachers, coaches, and family.

Optimism and Positive Attitude: Share with your mentor your overall outlook on life. Do you consider yourself to have a positive attitude? What makes you have a negative attitude? Are you optimistic about your future education and career? Ask your mentor about their outlook on life? What is it like to work with someone who has a negative attitude? How has their attitude affected their life and career?

Innovation and Creativity: Share with your mentor a time when you used innovation and creativity to solve a problem. What was the problem? In what innovative way did you solve the problem? How successful was your solution? Ask your mentor how they or the company used innovation and creativity to solve problems and stay ahead of trends? What are the risks and benefits to creativity?

Asking for Help: Share with your mentor a time when you may or may not have asked for help. How did you learn from that experience? How do you know when you need to ask for help? Do you ever feel nervous or ashamed about asking for help? Ask your mentor how they seek guidance from their coworkers and supervisor when needed. Do they ever feel apprehensive about asking for help? How do they know when to problem solve independently vs. asking for help?

Responsible Decision Making: We make hundreds of decisions a day. Some are easy and some are difficult. Some have negligible outcomes, and some make a huge impact. Being faced with a difficult decision is not easy. Describe a time when you were faced with a difficult decision. How did you handle it? Would you handle it differently in the future? How do you make a responsible decision? Ask you mentor to share how they make responsible decisions.

Finding Your Purpose: Finding your purpose creates a sense of meaning in your life. You know what you love to do, what you are good at, and how you can contribute to the world. What do you think your purpose is? What is a cause you are passionate about? Do you think there is a way to align your purpose with your future career goals? Ask your mentor what their purpose in life is or a cause they are passionate about. Are they able to directly affect this cause through their work and/or personal life?

Career Exploration

Resume/Cover Letter Review: Ask your mentor which skills they believe are necessary for various jobs, including their own job. **Attach your Cover Letter and/or Resume in the eMentors Messaging Portal.** Ask your mentor for suggestions to improve your resume and cover letter. Please make sure you remove all personal information from your resume and cover letter (email, phone number, address, etc.).

Interviewing Skills: Share any interview experience you have had (job interviews, college interviews, mock interviews, etc.) What skills are important when interviewing (both verbal and non-verbal)? Ask your mentor about ways to improve your interviewing skills, and what employers look for in an interview.

Interview Advice: Share with your mentor that we are learning about employment strategies in class. Describe the types of interviews you have experienced so far and share the biggest lessons you have learned. Ask your mentor about their interview experiences.

Where Do You See Yourself in 5-10 Years? A common interview question you will be asked is, “Where do you see yourself in 5-10 years?” Take some time to think about your future and write a response to the question. 5-10 years seems like quite a long way away. However, the steps you take today can put in motion your future aspirations. What near-term opportunities are available to set the stage for your long-term career goals? Ask your mentor to help brainstorm some ideas to achieve your goals.

Elevator Speech: As you prepare for college and/or the workforce, developing an elevator speech becomes important. An elevator speech should highlight a person’s best attributes and/or personal goals during the time of an elevator ride (30 seconds, 50-100 words). An elevator speech could also be stating clearly what type of job you are looking for. Prepare and send your elevator speech to your mentor and ask for feedback. Ask your mentor if she/he has given an elevator speech or has one ready, and what that might include?

Goal Setting: Set goals and action steps for the final trimester of the school year. Message your goals to your mentor. Statistics show that when goals are written down they are more likely to be achieved. Ask your mentor about goals they have set and about the plans they have set in place to accomplish them.

Corporate Culture: What kind of company culture do you think you want to work in, and why? (Some examples include: the ability to work from home, fun work environment, more structured workspace, etc.). Ask your mentor about their experience with different corporate cultures. What is their current corporate culture like? What corporate culture an important factor in choosing a job? How did they know it was the right fit?

Workplace Values: Share what is important to you in a work environment now, and what type of work environment you would like in the future. How important are things like the company’s mission, the option of flextime or telecommuting, and the company’s philanthropic initiatives? How important are personal values such as job satisfaction, salary, benefits, etc.? Ask your mentor what they value in a work environment, and what criteria are important to consider as you enter the workforce.

Workplace Environment: Describe your school's environment. Is it fun, is there good morale among students? Teachers? Are the administrators well liked? Describe the type of environment that you think you'd like to work in someday. Ask your mentor about their work environment and what is valued in it (collaboration, autonomy, independence, pride in work, etc.) How does having a good environment affect the output of the work you do? What is something you'd change about your school or work environment?

Job Search: Ask for suggestions on what you can do between now and graduating from high school/college that will help you secure a permanent fulltime position. What kinds of things would separate you from other candidates stress when applying for a job? When thinking about a job, what kinds of skills are employers looking for? Did your mentor do anything that helped them stand out?

Deciding on a Career: Ask your mentor how they chose their current career. Have they ever thought about doing something else? What factors go into deciding whether or not to pursue a career? What does it mean to have a passion for something? Tell your mentor about the things you like to do. Can they think of a career that fits well with those things? Does it surprise you?

Strengths and Weaknesses: Share with your mentor what your top three strengths are. If you have a job, how do these help you in your work? What are three of your weaknesses? How are you working to improve upon them? Ask your mentor about their strengths and weaknesses. How does that knowledge help them in their career? What is a weakness they have improved? How did they do it?

Networking: Share with your mentor what you know about networking. Who would you consider to be in your network? Has anyone you know helped you or a family member get a job? Ask you mentor about their network. How do they meet new people (expand their network)? How do they use their network to advance their career? What methods of networking do they use (networking events, LinkedIn, face-to-face meetings, etc.)? What advice can they give you about starting to build your network?

Work/Life Balance: Ask your mentor about their work/life balance. What are their typical working hours? Can they work from home? Do they travel for work? Tell your mentor about your extracurricular activities, work responsibilities, and how you spend your time outside of school. Share the amount of time that you spend with your family and friends. Ask how do they make time to be with their family and friends? Ask how they ensure time for both work and to enjoy life so they keep good mental health. Ask if they've ever felt pressure from their supervisor to work more. Ask for tips on how to achieve a good balance.

Career Skills

Workplace Etiquette (Behaviors & Social Skills): Tell your mentor what you think are the top three best and worst workplace behaviors and social skills. Describe any experiences you've had related to these at work, in school, or in the community. Your mentor will also list their top three best and worst workplace behaviors and social skills, along with examples from their professional experience. Mentors will describe any policies that exist at their job regarding workplace etiquette, and if consequences are in place if employees don't comply with these policies.

Workplace Communications: Write about how you communicate with your friends, parents, and teachers. Do you have social media? What do you use it for? Do you use this technology for school assignments or to communicate with your teacher? Ask your mentor about using email, phone and other methods of communicating with their co-workers. Also ask about how many emails, phone calls, and text messages your mentor receives in a day, and how quickly they respond to messages, etc. Do they want to implement any other forms of communication? If so, what/why?

Emotional Intelligence: You may have heard about IQ (Intelligence Quotient), but have you heard about EQ (Emotional Quotient)? Your EQ is just as important as your IQ in terms of skills employers are looking for in a potential employee. Having a high EQ means you are self-aware, able to self-regulate your emotions, are highly motivated, can practice empathy, and have high social skills. Do you think you have a high EQ? Do you think it's fair for employers to look at only one or the other (EQ vs. IQ)? Ask your mentor how they see EQ impact the workforce.

Attendance and Punctuality: Discuss your school's attendance policy, including what time school starts and ends and what happens if you are absent, skip class, or are tardy. Share how many classes you go to, whether or not you have a study hall, etc. Ask about your mentor's vacation, sick, and flex time. What types of paid time off are offered? Ask if there are strict start/end times or how flexible a daily schedule could be.

Taking a Risk: Taking a risk to achieve a goal requires courage to face the fear of uncertainty. No matter the outcome, we grow through the process and become more resilient and confident. Better yet, building those skills helps in taking more risks and improves the chances of achieving future goals. Have you taken a risk? If yes, describe the situation and outcome to your mentor. If you haven't taken a risk, describe to your mentor an area in your life where you would like to take a risk. Ask your mentor if they have ever taken a risk at work. What was the outcome? How did it make them feel?

Managing Time: Discuss how many hours you spend doing schoolwork, attending classes, participating in extracurriculars, and hanging out with friends. Discuss the importance of managing time, using calendars, and setting priorities. Ask your mentor how they schedule their time. How do they find balance between working, family time, hobbies, etc. Ask about how often meetings are scheduled, how long they are, etc. Ask for tips on managing your time.

Presentation Skills: Tell your mentor about the public speaking experience you have (school projects, speech class, etc.). What skills are important in public speaking and making presentations? Share a few skills you are good at, and ask your mentor what skills they think are important. Also ask your mentor about presentations they make at work, and how they prepare for those presentations. What visual aids do they use in presentations?

Social Media for Business: Tell your mentor about what social media you use. Do you use it for networking? What social media does your mentor use? How has their use of social media changed over time? Do they use it to network and find new job opportunities through LinkedIn or other professional social media sites? What do you and they see as the benefits and drawbacks of social media? Do you both think social media can provide positive change in communities and the world? If so, in what way?

Self-Reflection: Self-reflection gives the brain the opportunity to pause, sort through observations and experiences, consider multiple possible outcomes, and create meaning. Self-reflection allows you to look back on a scenario and analyze how it went. What went well? How could you improve? Taking the time to pause and reflect allows you the opportunity to change and grow in different scenarios. Pick a scenario you would like to self-reflect on and describe the experience to your mentor. Practice self-reflection by answering the following questions: What did I say, do, and feel during this experience? What options do I see for the next time I encounter this situation? How can I grow from this experience? Ask your mentor if they have any advice regarding your scenario and how they implement self-reflection.

Influences Global and Local

Role Models: Many of us have people in our life who are influential in our decisions. Share who two of your role models are. These could be other mentors, coaches, family members, athletes, teachers,

etc. Share how and why these people have had a positive impact on your life and how you have changed since recognizing this person as a role model. Ask your mentor about the role models they have had and if those role models have changed throughout their life. Tell your mentor what you are doing to be a positive role model in someone else's life.

Leadership Roles: Discuss any leadership roles you have taken on, or those you have seen your peers take on. This could include being a captain of a team, being a group leader, being a member of a club, or any other leadership role. If you have not been a leader, you are encouraged to share about other ways you have worked with your friends, classmates, or family to get something done. What skills do you see are needed to be a good leader? Ask your mentor about leadership roles they have had and how it has benefited him/her. What skills does your mentor think are needed to be a good leader?

Volunteerism: Tell your mentor about any current volunteer activities you participate in or have been a part of in the past. This could include volunteering at a community organization, a church, or helping a neighbor. If you don't currently volunteer, share with your mentor an organization/place you would like to volunteer with or a volunteer activity you would like to pursue. Do you think it is important to volunteer? Why or why not? What skills can you offer others through volunteering? Ask your mentor where they have volunteered, and what they liked about it.

Workplace Diversity: Discuss diversity within your school (race, religion, culture, etc.). Share how you have learned to get along with students unlike yourself. Ask your mentor about diversity in their workplace and how they interact with people from other backgrounds. What impact has working with people from other backgrounds had on their life?

Working in a Global World: Share with your mentor any experiences you have working with individuals from different cultures or your experiences being in a different culture. What did you notice about the culture's differences? Ask your mentor about the experiences they have had working with people from different cultures. Have they worked in different parts of the world? Do they work with people located in or from different parts of the world? What do they notice about the cultural differences? How do they successfully work with people of a different background?

Intercultural Competency: Share a time when you worked with individuals from a different cultural background than yourself. What did you learn from working with the group? What differences did you notice about the culture? Were there challenges? Did you gain an appreciation for the culture? Ask your mentor to share a similar experience. What did they learn from the experience? How do they apply that experience to their workplace and life?

Academic Prep

Academic Skills Needed for Careers: Share with your mentor the skills you are learning in school that you think will be important for your future career (business, reading, writing, math, science)? What skills do you think will not be important? Ask your mentor about the skills they learned in school that were helpful to him/her in their career. What skills do they wish they had developed further while in school? What skills did they not expect to need?

Lifelong Learning: Share with your mentor what you expect to learn once you graduate college and start a career. Do you think you will continue to keep learning? Will you keep taking classes, reading books, writing, practicing skills? Ask your mentor what they are learning now that they are done with college. Do they have to keep learning for their job? What tools are they using to keep learning? Are they taking classes or learning on the job? Would they consider themselves to be a 'lifelong learner'? What other interests have they developed since school (appreciation of poetry, love for geography)?

Academic Motivation: Share with your mentor your attitude towards school? Do you like school? What motivates you to stay in school? What motivates you to do well in school? Ask your mentor what their attitude towards school was? How did their attitude towards education change after they started in a full-time position? What kind of student were they in school? What motivated him/her to finish school?

Perseverance: Tell your mentor about a time when you completed a goal even though you were faced with challenges along the way (e.g.: writing a tough paper). How did you persevere to overcome any obstacles? Did you ask for guidance along the way? Ask your mentor how they practice perseverance in their job. What advice can they give you to stick to your goals and overcome obstacles?

College Preparation

Academic Experience: Share with your mentor the classes you enjoy most in high school. What majors are you interested in studying in college? Ask your mentor what their major was in college. Did they have any minors? How did they choose what to study? How does their academic education in college help him/her in their current job? Would they have done anything differently? What level of school did they get through (undergrad, grad degree, PhD, etc.)?

College Life/Experience: Share with your mentor what you are looking forward to doing in college. Ask your mentor about their college experience. What types of activities were they involved in outside of classes (student groups: Greek life, professional organizations, student gov't, etc., volunteer opportunities, and internships)? What activities helped him/her most prepare for their career post-college?

Student - College Life/Paying for Post-Secondary Education: Tell your mentor about your post-secondary education plan. This could include if you plan to attend or not, then state why you made that decision.

If you do plan to go: Write to your mentor about any concerns or excitement about moving, making the transition, paying for post-secondary schooling. Ask for advice that will make the transition easier, methods for saving for college now. Ask if your mentor has suggestions for ways you can find scholarships or grants to help pay for college. Ask your mentor how they paid for their post-secondary schooling.

If you don't plan to go: Tell your mentor about the decision you have made and how you envision life without attending school. Students spend 6-8 hours a day in school. After graduation, how you will spend your time?

Business

Marketing: Discuss ways in which marketing affects the choices you make. Describe brand identity and how that impacts your choices. Your mentor will describe to you the customers they serve within their organization and successful advertising techniques. Ask them to write about competitors, pricing and promotions.

Accounting/Finance: Write about how you earn money and ways in which you save money and control your finances/spending. Ask your mentor about how their company manages their budgets and finances. How do other parts of the business (such as Marketing, Human Resources, Operations, etc.) interact with the financial side of the business? Share your experience in class working on accounting and what parts of accounting you enjoy/don't enjoy. Ask your mentor to share some examples of where businesses have misused or misunderstood the basic concepts of accounting.

Current Trends/Challenges: Ask what the biggest business/company challenge facing your mentor is currently. How do they plan to overcome the challenges? What trends are they seeing in their target market currently that are affecting their business?

Project Management: Provide a thorough but concise overview of what you are learning related to project management in the workplace. Have you participated in any class exercises based on project management? Ask your mentor for some tips in effective project management. This could include managing deadlines and people, setting realistic goals and evaluating the project once it is completed. Inquire about their experiences related to management and ask for advice in dealing effectively with these situations.

Sales: Share about something you bought recently where the purchase decision was motivated by an ad, commercial or video. This could be something that you had never tried before or something you buy often and bought again. Share if you think your purchase decision was motivated by the advertisement. Ask your mentor their opinion on how consumer motives are influenced by sales and marketing campaigns. Do emotional motives trump rational motives? Ask your mentor about strategies their company uses to boost sales.

Economics

Economics: Talk with your mentor about how people feel about the economy. What do they mean when they say it is “good” or “bad?” What experiences shape how a person thinks about the state of the economy?

Inflation: Examine how inflation affects individual businesses and workers. Ask your mentor what they consider to be the appropriate yearly inflation rate? Is inflation considered in their annual salary review? What effect do changes in the inflation rate affect have on your mentor’s company investment decisions?

Monetary Policy: Ask your mentor how a reduction in the interest rate to borrow money affects the money supply? Does your mentor see a change in the economy, such as housing, when interest rates change? Do they see other examples of changes in behavior based on interest rates? Does your mentor’s company have its own bank or credit union? Is that a benefit to the employees?

Fiscal Policy: How do taxes affect your mentor’s business? Has their business ever considered leaving Minnesota for another state with lower taxes? Discuss whether your mentor feels that state government should offer more tax breaks/incentives to business?

International Trade: Explore the ways that international trade and finance affect the workings of an individual company. Ask how international currency fluctuations affect your mentor’s analysis of an investment? To what extent do international political events affect the firms your mentor evaluates? Discuss what steps your mentor’s company takes to mitigate these risks?

Science, Technology & Math

Science Careers: Describe any careers in science that interest you. The career does not have to specifically relate to the class subject – consider science as a broad field. What courses are you taking to prepare for that career? Ask your mentor how they got into a science career. What classes did they take in high school/college that have helped the most?

Technology: Talk about the apps and software you are learning in school, at home, or on your job. Technology could include cloud computing, cell phones, apps, iPads, e-Readers, iPods, etc. Ask your mentor about the technology they use on the job and at home. Ask your mentor to explain how they have seen technology change in the last five-ten years. How has their use of technology or habits changed and made him/her more productive?

Advancement of Technology: Students should discuss with their mentors any new technological advances that have recently been made, such as apps, Droids, iPhone, iPad, tablets, etc. How have these revolutionized the technology industry? How have they raised the bar for the competition? Do they think technological advancements are always a good thing? Students should then ask their mentor how they have seen technology advance since they were in high school. What do you anticipate the next tech gadget will be—or what would you like to see produced?

Math in Everyday Life: Think about how math is used in day-to-day activities, such as paying for a meal at a restaurant and figuring out the tip or calculating the mileage a vehicle gets. How many times during the day are you using or exposed to basic math without thinking about it? What activities can you think of that you didn't realize used math? Ask your mentor how they may use basic math on the job each day.

Math in Adulthood: Think about math skills you may need to acquire as an adult. What kinds of skills will be important (think about doing your own taxes, balancing your checkbook, making a household budget, saving for retirement, etc.)? Ask your mentor what kinds of math skills are important as an adult, and how they learned those skills.

Interpreting and Displaying Data: Share a math topic you are studying and the way you are displaying the relevant data (scatter plot, histogram, stem and leaf plot, etc.). Ask your mentor how they use data displays in the workplace. You should also ask if they ever need to create displays or interpret the information to be more efficient/comprehensible.

Health & Wellness

Healthcare Careers: Describe a career in healthcare that interests you. The career does not have to specifically relate to the class subject – consider healthcare as a broad field. What courses are you taking to prepare for that career? Ask your mentor how they got into a healthcare career. What classes did they take in high school/college that have helped the most?

Mindfulness: Mindfulness is the ability to be fully present in the moment. Being mindful also has many benefits from decreased stress and sadness to increased levels of focus and happiness. Do you find time during your day to pause and be fully present? Talk to your mentors about ways you could be more mindful throughout your day. Do they have any mindfulness strategies?

Stress Management: High School can be a very stressful time; managing schoolwork, extracurricular activities, a part time job, and time with friends/family. Tell your mentor about a couple things that are currently causing you stress. How do you manage stressful situations? Explain how stressful situations can affect your overall health. Ask your mentor what they do to manage stress.

Personal Development: Personal development means that you are always trying to improve. This could be improving a skill like a sport or instrument. This could also mean working on communicating more calmly during an argument. We all have ways to improve ourselves and become an even better version. Discuss with you mentor some areas in your life where you are trying to improve. Why is it important to you to constantly be improving?

Customize a Guiding Topic

Don't see a guiding topic that fits within your curriculum? All you need to do is:

1. Create Topic Title: provide very brief 2-4 words summarizing the topic/contents
2. Create a Prompt: write leading questions/topics the students should share with their mentor. Follow the format of one of the previous questions already selected for the students. Write in first person such as "share with your mentor, ask your mentor, etc."

eMentors for AVID*

Introductions: Introduce yourself by sharing your name, pronouns, grade, and a brief description of AVID. What do you like and/or dislike about being in AVID? Share at least 4 things about yourself, like your favorite subject, extracurricular activities, number of siblings, etc. Ask your mentor to explain what they do in their job. Also ask your mentor about their education and training during and after high school. Looking back, what did they like most about these experiences and what do they wish they could have changed? You can also ask about their family or hobbies.

Academic Experience: Share with your mentor the classes you enjoy most in high school. What major(s) are you interested in studying in college? Ask your mentor what their major was in college. Did they have a minor? How did they choose what to study? How does their academic education in college help them in their current job? Would they have done anything differently? What level of school did they get through (undergrad, grad degree, PhD, etc.)?

Writing Skills: Tell your mentor about the writing you do for school. This could be writing answers on worksheets, composing short stories/essays, creating book reports, etc. Do you like to write for school? Why or why not? Now ask your mentor about the writing they do for work. Do they write email messages, reports, letters, directions/instructions, etc? How important are writing skills for their job? Have they always been a confident writer? If not, how did they improve?

Goal Setting: Statistics show that when goals are written down they are more likely to be achieved. Think of a goal you can achieve in the remainder of the quarter, semester, or year, whichever your teacher prefers. Why did you choose this goal? What steps will you take to achieve it? Ask your mentor about goals they have set and the plans they made to accomplish them. What do they think makes a "good" goal?

Teamwork: Tell your mentor about the "teams" you are on. These could be for school projects, sports, theater, work, etc. Share what you think are the qualities of a good teammate. Then ask your mentor what they think being a good teammate means. Ask how often their job requires working in a team and how often they get to choose who they work with. In what ways does your mentor collaborate with peers to solve a problem or achieve a goal? Share how you have done this in your life.

Staying Organized & Managing Time: Do you always show up to class prepared? Explain to your mentor how you keep your materials (homework, books, writing utensils, etc) organized. Then ask whether or not your mentor has a system for staying organized. If so, what is it?

Discuss how many hours you spend doing schoolwork, attending classes, participating in extracurriculars, and hanging out with friends. Discuss the importance of managing time, using calendars, and setting priorities. Ask your mentor how they schedule their time. How do they find balance between working, family time, hobbies, etc? Ask for tips on managing your time.

College Life/Experience: Share with your mentor what you are looking forward to doing in college. Ask your mentor about their college experience. What types of activities were they involved in outside of class? Did they participate in student groups like Greek like, professional organizations, or student government? What about volunteering or internships? What activities helped them most prepare for their post-college career? Thank your mentor for writing and remind them that this is your last email message.

eMentors for Financial Literacy*

Introductions: Introduce yourself by sharing your name, pronouns, grade, and the class that you are in right now. Share some of your favorite things, like favorite books, TV shows, movies, sports, etc. Tell your mentor what you think of school. Do you like it? Why or why not? Then ask your mentor about their family, hobbies, and interests. What was their high school experience like? What did they do in high school that was most valuable for preparing for their current job?

Values and Spending: What kind of spender are you? Are you thrifty, impulsive, generous, cautious? Give some thought to what values are important to you. For example: family, health, happiness, relationships, social issues, education, career, independence, etc. Pick your top three and share these with your mentor. Does the way you spend money reflect your values? Why or why not? Ask your mentor what their values are and how their spending reflects them.

Career Planning for Financial Success: Talk with your mentor about why they chose the career they did. What kinds of financial factors (salary, stability of income, potential for promotion, etc.) did they think about when making career choices? Share with your mentor if money plays a role when you think about potential careers. Make sure to explain why/how. Ask your mentor if they ever had to decide between a high salary and job satisfaction. Is it possible to have both?

Buying Smart: Think about something you've bought (or want to buy) recently. How did you decide if it was worth the cost? In general, how do you decide something is worth buying? Ask your mentor about their last major purchase. Did they consider buying something else? Did they have to do research before buying it? How do they know that a purchase is a good financial decision?

Budgeting: Think of a time you've saved up to buy something. How long did it take you to save enough money? How did you decide how much money you would save each day, week, month, etc? Ask your mentor if they have a budget. How do they make their budget? What kinds of things are in their budget? Retirement, education, entertainment? Are they ever tempted to ignore their budget?

Using Credit: What do you know about credit cards? Are you planning on getting one? Explain to your mentor how you think credit cards work and whether they are good, bad, or both. Credit (getting a loan from a bank and agreeing to pay it back later) is more than just credit cards. Ask your mentor how they use credit. Do they use a credit card or a debit card? When they buy something on credit, how do they determine what the real or added cost of the product is? What does it mean to have "good" credit?

Financial Independence: Share with your mentor what you think it means to be financially independent, then ask your mentor for their definition. Can a financially independent person have loans? Does a financially independent person still have to use a budget? Tell your mentor at least

one thing you're now going to do to make smart financial decisions. Thank your mentor for sharing their insights with you?

eMentors for STEM*

Introductions: Introduce yourself by giving your name, grade, classes in school, and any teams or extracurricular activities you participate in. Share a few of your favorites; favorite subject, how you spend your time, etc. Share any interest you have in STEM careers. Ask your mentor about their job and company, what their daily tasks include, how long they have been in the role, company's mission, etc. You can also ask your mentor about their family and hobbies.

College Exploration & Parallel Planning: Share about the post-secondary options/colleges you've heard of, researched and/or visited. Share any steps you have taken toward a post-secondary path that interests you. Ask your mentor about the college(s) they attended and what drew them to that school. Ask if they changed schools or majors along the way. Ask how or in what ways they've continued to grow their skills and how they are preparing for their next career move. Ask about early experiences they had that drew them into STEM. Share about any experiences you've had that piqued your interest in STEM.

Values and Time Management: Discuss how you stay organized and how you manage your time. Do you use a planner, electronic calendar, etc. Ask your mentor how they plan their time; what tools do they use and how do they fit everything in. Ask them to share how they find balance between priorities like work, family, hobbies, etc. Ask about allocating time to complete tasks, assignments and projects. Ask your mentor to give specific examples of how their values (what's important) help them determine how they spend their time. Ask for tips on managing your time and fitting in the things that are important.

Engagement Beyond the Classroom: Employers tell us their top job candidates have a resume that includes activities and experiences outside the classroom which teach skills beyond academics. Share with your mentor the activities you participate in outside of class; this could include extracurriculars, teams, clubs, committee and volunteer work. If you are not currently involved, share the interests you have. Think about the skills you use while participating in those activities (leadership, communication, coding, motivating people, problem solving ,etc.) Ask your mentor what advice they would give to a high school student about participation in clubs, jobs, or other activities. How have they used skills learned outside of their job? If there is a skill you want to learn, ask your mentor for advice on how to develop the skill.

Finding Success & Personal Well-Being: Share with your mentor what success and personal well-being mean to you. Share ways you embrace positivity and ways you seek personal well-being. Share about stress or anxiety you experience and how you manage and/or reduce it. Ask your mentor about successes they've had overcoming challenges. Ask how they reduce stress and anxiety to achieve personal well-being and do they utilize any specific resources?

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: Diversity, equity and inclusion are topics being discussed in most workplaces. Employees are being encouraged to embrace diversity, to seek equity and to value inclusion. Discuss what these terms mean to you. Ask your mentor about the diversity in their company and how they benefit from a diverse workforce and culture. Ask if employees' backgrounds are embraced at their company and what is being done to ensure all employees are included. Also ask about resources available to help employees learn more about various cultures, equity in the workplace and inclusive practices.

Grit and Resilience: Share a time when you applied determination or perseverance to a situation and achieved a successful outcome. Share if you have ever drawn upon a support network to get through a tough time or if you have ever been a key support person in someone else's support network. Define grit, determination and resilience. Ask your mentor about perseverance and how they have overcome challenges. Also ask about support networks your mentor has that help them succeed in work and life.

****eMentors for AVID/Personal Financial/STEM are ready-to-use guiding question lists for specific types of classes. Teachers are also welcome to select individual guiding questions from these lists.***

9th Grade Pathway

Introduction: Introduce yourself by giving your name, pronouns, and grade. Share your perspectives on school and talk about your classes and/or any extracurricular activities you are part of or looking forward to joining. Ask your mentor about their high school experience – were they motivated? What classes did they like? What extracurricular activities did they do? You may also ask if there was anything they learned or gained during high school that they still apply to their current professional work today.

Areas of Interest/Passion: Share more about yourself such as your interests, passions, and/or hobbies outside of class. Talk about when you first became interested in it and what you enjoy most about it. Ask your mentor about their interests, passions, and/or hobbies they enjoy and why they enjoy them. You can also ask if there were any interests, passions, and/or hobbies they gained from high school.

Future Goals: Think about life after high school. What do you want to do for a job or a career? If you're not sure exactly what job you want, what would be your dream job if you could do anything? Ask your mentor what careers they were interested in growing up and if they ended up in one of the careers they were interested in. If not, what made them decide to pursue another career path? You can also ask if there were any classes they took that helped them after high school or if there were any classes they wished they had taken in high school.

Exploring Skills Aligned to Goals: Since you have shared your dream job or future career with your mentor, ask your mentor what skills or experience you'd need to be successful in this field. Do you need to go to college or trade school for this job or career? If so, what major or specialty would you study? What classes can you take or clubs can you join to gain more skills or knowledge about this career? What skills do you need to be successful in this field. If you're not sure, you can look up what general skills are needed for that job or career field.

Setting Short-Term Goals: Now that you have a better idea about what you want to do after high school, it's time to think about what steps you can take right now to reach your goals. Identify a few short-term goals that will support your dream job or future career. Discuss with your mentor how these short-term goals will help you. If you're unsure, ask your mentor what short-term goals they have set for themselves that helped them reach their goals/career.

Learning from Failures and Mistakes: You have talked about your short-term goals for the future and some things you can do today to achieve those goals. Along the way, you might make a mistake or have a setback that feels like a failure. Ask your mentor about their experiences with mistakes and failures. What have they learned from their experiences with mistakes and failures?

Reflecting on Themes: You've discussed with your mentor about your interests, goals in life, and skills for success. Can you think of something you learned about yourself and share it with your mentor? Think about what you have learned and share how you can apply that to your own high school career moving forward.