

ACADEMIC SESSIONS

Guide to creating fun and memorable academic sessions for outreach events



1. KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

Most outreach visitors are still at school. Therefore academic content needs to be adjusted and explained in an accessible manner. Try not to presume too much prior knowledge. At the same time, students will want an authentic experience so it is okay if the content is challenging or difficult. If unsure, ask the SLO for advice!

2. CHOOSE AN INTERESTING TOPIC

Interesting is relative but for young people, a topic that relates to something they already know or something they can relate to, is usually a good bet! Students appreciate and acknowledge passion so your research area/interests could be a potential starting or end point.

3. INTERACTIVITY

Students are not used to sitting and taking in information passively. Equally, asking questions to individuals and expecting hands up can be intimidating for some. An easy way to be more interactive is to pose a question, let them discuss as a group, and then get each group to feedback their thoughts.

4. PLAN IN AN ACTIVITY

Along with being interactive during your main teaching, it is useful for students to consolidate their learning by actually doing some work. Whether it is a worksheet or just a small group task, students are more likely to learn if they can apply what they have been taught.

5. HAVE VISUALS AND HANDOUTS

To help with concentration levels, it is a good idea to have some visuals whether it be a powerpoint or just drawing on a whiteboard. A handout with a summary of information along with recommendations for further exploration is extremely useful!

6. LEAVE TIME FOR QUESTIONS

Every group is different. Some will have loads of questions throughout and some will save them to the end. Some groups may not have any. Don't be put off if there aren't any questions.

7. BE PERSONAL

Share your own experiences and how you got to where you are. Some students we work with have never met anyone who has gone to university. Sharing your journey through higher education can be inspiring and impactful.

8. HAVE FUN WITH IT!

Students respond well to humour, energy and passion. If you show how much you love your subject, they'll recognise that education can be fun, exciting and interesting.

