

Talking Points

When we change how we talk about engineering, we can change what students think about engineering.

- 1 **Ask students what they are interested in.** You can connect almost any interest to an engineering education or field:
 - **Art?** Industrial Design combines engineering, human factors, and aesthetics to design toys, consumer products, and more.
 - **Sports?** Engineers design sports equipment, build sports facilities, develop safety standards, and tools for coaching and training.
 - **Theater?** Share how digital technology is transforming productions including interactive lighting, automated scenery shifts, special effects, and even animatronic actors.
 - **Politics?** There are many members of Congress with engineering degrees serving in the House and the Senate.

***Tip:** Make sure to repeat the words the students use. For example, if they said baseball, connect back to baseball rather than substituting sports. This helps students (and adults!) feel heard and builds trust.*



- 2 **Show them the money!** A top career concern for students and their parents is financial security. While you don't have to share your salary, be prepared to talk about starting salaries in your field.
- 3 Ask them if they want to **make a difference in the world**. Share the social and/or environmental impacts of your work or broader field. Tell them how engineers are cleaning up ocean garbage, developing safe habitats for astronauts on the moon, redesigning highways and roadways to reduce accidents, working on sustainable and clean energy sources, inventing new intravenous treatments for depression, and more!
- 4 Talk about the **varying levels of education the people** who work on your engineering team or at your company have. Tell them about the amazing jobs and career opportunities for people with high school diplomas, two-year degrees, four-year degrees, and beyond. This will be a big surprise to most students and their parents.
- 5 Share how engineers **work in teams and independently** and need good communication skills, critical thinking, and strategic planning.
- 6 **Don't speak about "being good at science and math"** as the first or main requirement to be a good engineer. Instead, speak about how everyone must work hard at science and math at some point and that learning to learn is as valuable, if not more valuable, than being or feeling "naturally" good at it.

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