

# Veteran Speakers in the Classroom

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**Goal:** Build a network of veteran community speakers for your classroom/school through parents, PTA, veterans' organizations, and other community resources. Veteran speakers can enrich the curriculum, as well as serve as positive role models for your students.

## **Guidelines and Instructions:**

1. Call the prospective guest speaker and discuss how he/she might be able to enrich the curriculum, as well as serve as a positive role model for your class. Assure the speaker that he/she can add a special vitality to the classroom by sharing appropriate experiences and interacting with the students. Describe your class to the speaker. Ask that he /she plan to allow approximately one-third of the class period for student questions. Reassure him/her that you will keep the ball rolling! Set the date!
2. Familiarize students with the background of the speaker and the purpose of his/her visit.
3. Conduct a "brainstorming" session during which students share ideas for questions and discussion.
4. Instruct each student to **prepare five questions for homework**. Collect and review student questions the following day.
5. Discuss question themes with guest speaker and /or mail questions to speaker ahead of time.
6. Return questions to each student prior to the guest speaker's visit. (Students will feel more comfortable if they can refer to their carefully prepared questions.)
7. Arrange for a student to meet the veteran speaker at the front office.
8. When the class begins, introduce the speaker or, if appropriate, have a student who has prepared an introduction do so. Let the class know whether they should hold their questions until the end. Be ready to ask questions yourself if necessary.
9. Assist the speaker in bringing the class to a close a few minutes before the period ends. Instruct students ahead of time that **polite applause is very appropriate**.
10. Arrange for a student to escort the speaker back to the front office.
11. As a follow up activity, have each student write a **reflective thank you letter** to the veteran speaker. Be sure to mail the packet of letters to each classroom visitor. Not only do they demonstrate caring appreciation, but they often help the speaker better prepare for future visits. These guests are often willing to serve as student resources throughout the year.
12. Encourage students to **write articles for a classroom newsletter, the school newspaper, PTA Newsletter, and local newspaper** regarding how these exciting veteran community members have made positive contributions to our educational programs. Other teachers, students, and parents will also see the benefits of inviting veteran community role models to our classrooms.