

VOLUNTEER FAQs JA BLENDED-MODEL PROGRAMS



Volunteer FAQs

JA Blended-Model Programs

- 1. What is blended learning?** Blended learning combines traditional classroom learning with online learning.
- 2. What does a JA blended-learning classroom look like?** The addition of technology in a JA classroom complements the student and volunteer experience. Imagine being able to play a two-minute video that explains world trade, after which students react to the video and share their thoughts. Compare that to a volunteer who must attempt to describe the same complex subject in his or her own words. Using blended learning, the volunteer can concentrate on sharing a local example following the video and ask students if they can come up with examples of their own. They might share those examples verbally or respond in a discussion board, which allows all students to participate.
- 3. How are JA blended-learning programs delivered?** JA's blended programs use a learning management system (LMS), a software application accessed via the Internet, called Desire2Learn (D2L). This system enables the creation, administration, and tracking of online courses. JA Areas will set up a course (your class) in the system and provide access to you, the classroom teacher, and the students. You will be enrolled in your assigned class and provided a username and password via email. You can access the system 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- 4. How do I know if I'm qualified to volunteer for JA blended-model programs?** If you use email and order products online, you have the skills to successfully use the online Learning Management System (LMS). With the help of JA training and your own preparation time, you can be an effective volunteer in the classroom.
- 5. Will all students in my class have computers?** The computer-to-student ratio will vary from school to school and may vary from session to session. JA recommends that volunteers work with their classroom teacher in advance to ensure a computer is available for volunteer use and connected to a projector that the entire class can see. This will allow for viewing of videos and other content.
- 6. What adjustments do I need to make if students are sharing a computer?** The sessions are designed so that four students can effectively share one device, if needed. Follow the teacher's advice in grouping students, and ask students to arrange their chairs or desks into pairs or pods so group members can talk easily and you can move about the room.
- 7. How do I get student's attention away from the computer when I want to ask a question or give instructions?** Explain your expectations during your first session with students, and then plan to give them a short transition period as they become accustomed to turning their attention from the computer to you. One suggested technique is slowly counting down from five to one and announcing "all hands free and eyes on me." The countdown gives students a few moments to wrap up whatever they are doing and focus on you.

8. What if the technology doesn't work when I get to the classroom? On occasion, the unexpected happens. If it does, you can use pre-printed materials downloaded from the LMS to deliver the session successfully.

9. What is next, after volunteer training?

a) Spend time in the LMS.

The Quick Start guide will help you get started right away and contains tips to help you find your way around the LMS and the course you will be teaching. Review the demonstration about how to access the LMS, D2L (Desire to Learn), by logging in. Tutorials are available to increase your comfort level. You should feel free to explore the system and download the Talking Points and Checklists for each session and review the session content.

Print any worksheets or other items that may be required during the class sessions.

b) Contact the assigned classroom teacher.

It is critical to the success of the JA class that the volunteer and teacher communicate several days before the first session. Volunteers will want to know and understand the type of technology the teacher will be using and the technology students will have access to.

Teachers are responsible for ensuring that Internet access is available; technology devices are charged; and students have been enrolled in the LMS. Volunteers will want to know the class size; receive a copy of the class roster; and understand how familiar students are in working with technology. (Do they work on computers or tablets daily or weekly in class, or will this be a unique opportunity for students? Does the teacher have any standard techniques that he or she uses to get students' attention when they are interacting with the computer?)