

Community in the Classroom

Frequently Asked Questions about Volunteering

What is Community in the Classroom?

Community in the Classroom is a CRS enrichment program that places scientist volunteers in classrooms to give fun, hands-on presentations connected to elementary science standards.

How old are the kids?

The students we work with are in grades K-5, which is approximately ages 5-11.

Where are the schools located?

We serve public elementary schools in Alameda County, so our schools cover a wide area. Currently, many of our requests come from Berkeley, Oakland, Emeryville, and Castro Valley. We make every attempt to honor your travel and geographic preferences and will never place you in a school that you'd have a hard time getting to!

How much time does it take?

We ask volunteers to commit to a minimum of three hour-long visits per school year. In addition, you'll attend three hours of group and individual training and spend a little extra time planning your presentation. You're not required to visit a school every month or volunteer on any kind of set schedule. However, if you'd like to make more than three visits a year, you're more than welcome to. Volunteering for Community in the Classroom is a small time investment that makes a huge impact on kids (and their teachers)!

How do I pick a presentation topic?

We work with you to find a match between what you love about science and what kids are learning at the elementary level. In addition, we have an extensive library of kid-tested classroom activities that are available for your use, and are happy to help with any research needs you have. Most people find several topics that they'd be interested in developing!

If you're short on time and are looking for a more "ready made" presentation topic, we have several outlines on file that have been developed by previous CIC volunteers. You are always welcome to choose one of these and either use it "as is" or adapt it to fit your interests.

I work full time. How can this fit into my schedule?

We schedule our trainings late in the afternoon, and individual training times are flexible. In order to schedule classroom visits, you do need to be available between 9:00 am – 2:00 pm on weekdays. However, since we only ask for three one-hour long visits per school year, your time away from work is very minimal. In addition, we're always happy to work with your employer to make it easier for you to take the time to volunteer.

I've never worked with young kids before. Does your training cover teaching techniques?

Absolutely! Most of our volunteers aren't experienced in working with younger students, so we offer extensive tips and tricks on how to keep your ideas simple, capture the attention of wiggly youngsters, and guarantee that both you and the kids have a great time. We'll also review and comment on your presentation outline to help make sure your language and concepts are at the appropriate grade level.

I'm not really a scientist. Can I still participate?

One of the philosophies of Community in the Classroom is that it's valuable for kids to be exposed to a wide range of science role models. Many of our volunteers work in a scientific field, but others work in technology, education, or are simply people who love science! Though it's important that you have sufficient educational background to discuss simple scientific concepts with confidence, it's not necessary that you be a "traditional" scientist to participate. If you have any questions about whether the program is a good fit for you, please feel free to contact CRS to discuss it in detail.

Community Resources for Science
practical support for great science teaching



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Community in the Classroom Role Model Training and Placement Process

| <u>Volunteer Actions</u> | <u>Recommended Timing</u> | <u>CRS Provides</u> |
|---|---|--|
| Look at California Science Standards | At your leisure | Standards Summary |
| Identify topic/grade level that connects your personal experience and interests with the standards | Prior to Volunteer Orientation if possible | |
| Work with CRS to identify/design hands-on activities to illustrate your presentation | 2-hour Orientation, plus additional follow-up as needed | Activities, research and consulting as needed. |
| Design classroom presentation including personal connections, hands-on activity, and any follow-up ideas | 3 to 5 hours, working independently | Individual consulting as needed |
| Submit final presentation to CRS for review | 3 weeks after training | Presentation review & feedback. |
| Submit available dates for your presentation to CRS | 3 weeks after training - to fit your schedule | Classroom placements on your dates |
| Receive confirmation of classroom placement | As scheduled | Written confirmations to volunteers and teachers |
| Make presentations | As Scheduled | |
| Submit evaluations | Within 1 week of presentation | Feedback received from teachers/students |