

Initiating a mentor relationship

Meeting a mentor

Symbiotic STEM mentors participate in individual mentoring sessions or group events. You can meet mentors either through virtual events, or via the [“Mentor System” page on the Symbiotic STEM website](#). If found on the website, the mentor’s email can be located in each profile. You will need to be 18 years old or submit [a signed permission slip](#) to communicate with mentors one-on-one and access the Mentor System. For more info go to symbioticstem.org/sign-up.

If the mentor participated in a school event, they may have provided their email during their presentation. If you did not obtain the mentor’s email, please reach out to the event coordinator (e.g., your high school’s science research teacher) for the mentor’s contact information.

Composing an email

Whether you are emailing a Principal Investigator (head of a lab) or an undergraduate student, communicating your point effectively in an email is critical! Please be sure to communicate the following points:

- **Your background**
- **Why you are reaching out to this mentor in particular**
- **What you are looking to gain from this mentorship experience**
 - Examples include:
 - Guidance for undergraduate applications
 - Learn more about research area of interest
- **Your expectations for this mentorship experience**
 - How frequently would you like to communicate with your mentor? For example, you may want to communicate weekly for a semester or just be in touch as needed on occasion.
 - What is your preferred method of communication?

Here’s an example:

Dear Simon,

I am a junior at Fresh Meadows High School. I saw your presentation with Symbiotic STEM in Ms. Clark’s class and was particularly interested in your work on cellular metabolism.

Currently, I am enrolled in AP Biology and applying to college next fall. Given your background, I would love to gain your perspective on how I can best prepare myself for undergraduate research opportunities.

If you are available, I would greatly appreciate the chance to speak with you about your undergraduate research experience on a monthly basis until the end of the year. Do you have any time to chat over Zoom this week or next?

Thank you so much for your time and consideration.

Best regards,
Nibras

Tip: Don't be afraid to follow up! Mentors may not always reply right away. If you don't hear back within a week, feel free to send a follow-up email to bring your message back to their attention.