IBM Z Xplore Activity Guide

The IBM Z Xplore Learning Platform is a fun way to get hands-on experience across a variety of technologies, to develop valuable skills, and to earn [digital badges](https://www.ibm.com/it-infrastructure/z/education/zxplore-badges) – no prior knowledge required and available year-round!

**Details:**

***This is list to help volunteers understand prep/requirements to run an event or activity (eg. Powerpoint presentation capabilities, paper, markers etc.)***

This activity kit introduces anyone who wants to host an event on IBM zSystems and enterprise computing. The learning platform allows hands-on access into the operating system while providing a helpful community, digital badges and rewards.

* IBM Z Xplore Learning Platform: Available year-round at no-cost to anyone who wants to learn more about IBM zSystems and enterprise computing. Get exposure through four different channels: Fundamentals, Concepts, Advanced and Extended to pick up hands-on experience with IBM zSystems and earn IBM Digital Badges along the way.
  + Fundamentals: Experience hands-on learning about data sets and how to use VS Code. Get introduced to coding languages such as JCL, Python, USS and more.
  + Concepts: Get increased knowledge on security, uptime, subsystems and enterprise scalability.
  + Advanced: Elevate your hands-on learning around Db2, COBOL, Linux and more.
  + Extended: Boost your skills further with hands-on learning around TSO, Machine Learning, Node.js, RACF and more.

1. Learn About the Platform

*This section is to help volunteers become familiar with the core topics of the Activity Kit and ensure they can competently speak to the content and technology on IBM Z Xplore*

IBM Z Xplore is a learning platform built to help students, educators and re-skillers develop and refine their IBM zSystems skills. Within our platform we have channels for learning and badge opportunities, as well as a forum for help and guidance.

Channels

* **Fundamentals:** Participants will begin in Fundamentals. There are 7 challenges in Fundaments: VSC1, Files, JCL, USS, Code, REXX and Wrap Up. The challenges within Fundamentals are sequential and provide hands-on experience with the mainframe. To advance through the challenges, you must complete the preceding one. For example, you must complete VSC1 to have access to Files. The Fundamentals channel should take ~10 hours to complete.
* **Concepts:** After completion of Fundamentals, the Concepts channel will be unlocked. There are five challenges within concepts and participants **do not** have to complete the challenges in sequential order. These challenges are conceptual, including readings and quizzes for users. You must complete at least two concept challenges to unlock the Advanced Channel. The Concepts channel will take ~2 hours to complete.
* **Advanced:** After completion of Concepts, the Advanced channel will be unlocked. These challenges are hands-on and build and expand on the skills introduced in Fundamentals. Some of these skills include: Db2, JCL, REXX, USS, VSAM, Linux and more. Throughout the year we will continue to add more Advanced challenges for users to complete. Participants have the autonomy to partake in the challenges of their choosing. You must complete at least five advanced challenges to receive a badge. The Advanced channel will take ~10-20 hours to complete.
* **Extended:** After completion of Concepts, the Extended channel will also be unlocked. These challenges are hands-on and introduce learners to skills outside of VS Code. This includes introduction to TSO/ISPF, Machine Learning, Node.js and RACF. We are continuously adding in more challenges within Extended. As of right now, you do not earn any badge if you complete Extended.

Badges

* Users have the opportunity to earn two industry recognized digital badges: IBM Z Xplore Concepts and IBM Z Xplore Advanced.
  + **IBM Z Xplore Concepts:** Earned after completion of the Fundamentals and Concepts channel.
  + **IBM Z Xplore Advanced:** Earned after receiving Concepts badge and completion of Advanced channel.

Forum/Discussion Board

* IBM Z Xplore provides a community-based forum for users to ask questions and get help on problems/challenges. Anyone who is using the platform can look to the forum for their answer or post their question themselves. This forum is community based, meaning other users are encouraged to help one another out and provide insight when possible. Users can post, reply and like responses as well as provide screenshots for help.

**Learn: Take Action**

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| Register for IBM Z Xplore and get started on the learning journey by completing the first challenges within Fundamentals.  [IBM Z Xplore Registration](https://ibm.biz/ibmz-xplore) | Watch the video walkthrough to help you register on IBM Z Xplore and become comfortable with navigating the platform.  [Video Walkthrough](https://www.ibm.com/community/z/advocacy/wp-content/uploads/IBM-Z-Xplore-Features-Walkthrough-Video.webmhd.webm) | Utilize the forum to ask any questions you may have while you become familiar with the platform and go through the challenges.  [IBM Z Xplore Forum](https://ibmzxplore.influitive.com/forum/) |

1. Prepare for your session

*This section helps volunteers prepare and gather materials for their IBM Z Xplore event*

[IBM Z Xplore Kit](https://www.ibm.com/community/z/advocacy/content-card/ibm-z-xplore-workshop-kit/)

In this [kit](https://www.ibm.com/community/z/advocacy/content-card/ibm-z-xplore-workshop-kit/), you will find more information about IBM Z Xplore - documents, images and FAQ. This kit should be your go-to for any questions or clarity you need.

[IBM Z Xplore Learning Platform](https://ibmzxplore.influitive.com/)

We encourage you to go through the platform yourself before your event. Login/sign-up, go through the onboarding and begin the first few challenges. Having familiarity on how the platform operates and what to look for will better aide you for your event.

* Registration Process:

1. Either click on the link below or click [here](http://ibm.biz/ibmz-xplore) to begin registration or to sign-in to the learning platform.
2. After completion of onboarding, you will head to the first channel (Fundamentals) and the first challenge (VSC1) to receive an IBM zSystems ID and PW to get started on the enterprise system.
3. Use the forum as a source for help during challenges for participants.

Create Your Event

After you have learned about the platform and feel confident to host your event, you will have to launch a registration website for your event. You can do this on Eventbrite, or any other platform you are comfortable and familiar with.

Socially Amplify Your Event

Once you have created your event, you will need to find a place to host it at.

* If it is virtual: Use a webinar platform to maximize the amount of people that can join.
* If it is in person: You will need to find a venue. This can be a room in a university or a space you rent out.

You can also create social tiles and flyers to hand out to begin spreading the word. Canva has plenty of free templates to get you started.

**Prepare: Take Action**

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| Use the IBM Z Xplore kit to find more information about IBM Z Xplore.  [**IBM Z Xplore Kit**](https://www.ibm.com/community/z/advocacy/content-card/ibm-z-xplore-workshop-kit/) | Lock in necessary details for your event:   * Date * Time * Location | Launch registration page   * Eventbrite * Crowdcast * Other | Promote your event all the way up through the day of your event   * Social Tiles * Flyers * Social Media posts |

1. Rehearse

*This section helps volunteers ensure they are comfortable with the presentation materials, presenting on IBM Z Xplore and are familiar with the required hands-on technology*

Become familiar with IBM Z Xplore

1. Make sure you have logged in or signed up on the [learning platform](https://ibmzxplore.influitive.com/) before helping others do it.
2. Once you have gotten into the platform, we encourage you to go through IBM Z Xplore yourself. Become familiar with the home page, where the channels are located, how to access challenges and where to find the forum for help.
3. If you are still uncomfortable presenting about IBM Z Xplore, please reference the [IBM Z Xplore kit](https://www.ibm.com/community/z/advocacy/content-card/ibm-z-xplore-workshop-kit/) for more information and documents explaining the learning platform. This kit also includes documentation on the software you will need as well as the IP addresses used to access the enterprise system.

Confirm Details

Ensure that your date, time and location are good to go. If you are virtual, make sure that the platform you are using works for audio, video and screensharing. If you are in person, confirm the date and time with the building you are using.

Check in on your registration page and continue to advertise for your event.

**Rehearse: Take Action**

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1. Facilitate [Day of Your Event]

*This section walks volunteers through the day-of step-by-step instructions; this section includes everything volunteers need to know to facilitate the activity on the day of their event*

This is a sample agenda you can use for your event. Feel free to adjust this agenda as you please.

0:00 -0:05: Attendees Join

Give your audience time to settle in. You can let your attendees know that you will be starting in a few minutes.

0:05-0:10: Introduction and Welcome

Use this time to introduce yourself and go through the agenda.

0:10-0:25: Introduction to Enterprise Computing with Introduction to IBM Z Xplore

Follow [this link](https://www.ibm.com/community/z/advocacy/wp-content/uploads/Introduction-to-Enterprise-Computing-Student.pptx) for an introduction to Enterprise Computing deck as well as a slide for IBM Z Xplore. We recommend that you introduce enterprise computing first to your audience, and then do an introduction to IBM Z Xplore and what the learning platform is about. Make sure you practice your presentation beforehand, so you are comfortable with the material.

0:25-0:50: Demonstration of IBM Z Xplore

Walk your attendees through the IBM Z Xplore platform from registration to the first and/or second challenge within Fundamentals (VSC1 and Files1). Inform users about the main page and how to navigate the platform. This includes: where to find challenges, where to find your ID and PW, “help” challenges, how to redeem your points for swag, and how to use the forum.

A sample flow idea for your demonstration:

* + - Sign up as a new user and go through onboarding
    - Look around the platform, taking note of the various features
      * *Mention that the channels are progressive*
    - Show audience where they can find the hands-on challenges by clicking on Fundamentals and beginning the VSC1 challenge
      * *Mention that Fundamentals is progressive*
    - Show users how to find their ID and PW to access IBM zSystems
    - Follow the steps in VSC1 and submit the required files. Demonstrate to users that after successful completion, the Files1 challenge is unlocked.
    - *Optional:* If time allows/if you are comfortable, feel free to walkthrough Files1 challenge as well.

0:50 mins - 1:00 hour: Q&A Session

Allow your attendees to ask any questions they may have about IBM Z Xplore and how to use the platform.

**Facilitate: Take Action**

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| Use the IBM Z Xplore kit to find more information to aid your facilitation.  [IBM Z Xplore Kit](https://www.ibm.com/community/z/advocacy/content-card/ibm-z-xplore-workshop-kit/) | Register for IBM Z Xplore and get started on learning journey by completing the first challenges within Fundamentals.  [IBM Z Xplore Registration](https://ibm.biz/ibmz-xplore) | Utilize the forum to ask any questions you may have while you become familiar with the platform and go through the challenges.  [IBM Z Xplore Forum](https://ibmzxplore.influitive.com/forum/) |

Additional Resources

*This section includes additional materials that can be a leave-behind for your audience to continue learning after the event.*

* [IBM zStudent Contest](https://ibm.biz/studentcontest2022)
* [IBM Z Xplore Essentials](https://ibm.biz/zxp-essentials)
* [IBM zSystems Global Student Hub Community](https://ibm.biz/studenthub)
* [IBM Z and LinuxONE Community](https://community.ibm.com/community/user/ibmz-and-linuxone/groups/topic-home?CommunityKey=e7b7d299-8509-4572-8cf1-c1112684644f)