



## First Job Fridays: James Franco

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Hollywood celebrities may seem all glitzy and glamorous, but, in reality, many of them had to work their way up from the humblest beginnings. Their first jobs were anything but dazzling, and often meant long nights and little pay.

In our regular First Job Friday feature on Information Station, we profile American success stories and the value of that first step on the career path.

This week, we're taking a look at James Franco, one of the most recognizable actors in Hollywood. As you probably know, he's starred in a long list of action flicks and comedies, including *Spider-Man*, *Pineapple Express*, and *The Interview*.

What you probably don't know is that Mr. Franco dropped out of UCLA after his freshman year to pursue an acting

career. Moreover, his parents forced him to support himself since he wasn't enrolled in school, which left the recent college dropout jobless and without a car. With no money to speak of, Mr. Franco was left with very few options, so he decided to apply for a job at a local McDonald's in Los Angeles and was hired the same day.

Assigned the late shift drive-thru position, Mr. Franco threw on the signature purple visor and began taking orders over his headset. To prepare for scenes in acting class, Mr. Franco started practicing fake accents at work — Brooklynese was one of his favorites — and even landed “several dates as a thick-tongued kid from Bed-Stuy.” He learned how to deal with different customers and work long hours for months on end — manning the drive-thru at night and, after his first month on the job, the front counter during the day.

In the process, Mr. Franco grew to appreciate his first taste of working life. As he later wrote in *The New York Times*, “When I was hungry for work, [McDonald's] fed the need.” And it set him on the path to success. Just three months later, Mr. Franco booked a Super Bowl commercial for Pizza Hut. It was his first gig, which meant that he could finally provide for himself as a young actor with big dreams.

While many young people have started out their careers in low-skilled jobs like food service and retail—it doesn't mean they don't get much-needed experience and “soft” skills like learning to work hard, deal with customers, and having the right attitude. This story shows that even the most humble beginnings can lead to the next big step. And, who knows, the next sizzling Hollywood star might be the one sizzling your Big Mac and fries.