

Self Assessment

To be successful in a career, you need to do something you enjoy and are good at. It should also be something that aligns with your values (what's important to you).



This quick self assessment will help you examine your interests, abilities, and values, and choose a career that will be a good match for you.

Consider Your Interests

1. What are your two favorite school subjects?

2. Name two hobbies or activities you enjoy.

3. Name one activity you become so involved in that you lose track of time.

4. When and where are you the happiest?

Career Clusters

Career Clusters are groups of careers with similar features. Exploring the 16 Career Clusters will help you figure out which career areas you want to explore further.



Which is a good fit for you?

Below are the 16 Career Clusters, along with a brief description of the kind of work people do in each. Put a ✓ by any Career Cluster you might be interested in.

- Agriculture, Food, & Natural Resources:** farm, fish, and work to improve the environment
- Architecture & Construction:** design, build, and maintain homes and structures
- Arts, A/V Tech & Communication:** design, create, perform, and produce multimedia content
- Business Management & Administration:** plan, oversee, and organize a business
- Education & Training:** teach in schools, libraries, museums, and businesses
- Finance:** manage and work with money
- Government & Public Administration:** make laws and provide public services
- Health Science:** work in the healthcare field treating people and animals

Research a Career

Researching a career means that you learn everything you can about that career. It's important to thoroughly research a career before you seriously consider it.



Information to Find

When researching a career, look for and think about the following.

- ▶ **Tasks and responsibilities** – What does someone in this career actually do? Is this something you think you would enjoy doing every day?
- ▶ **How do you become one?** – What kind of education/training does this career require? Is the amount of education required something you could do? For example, to be a veterinarian, you need 7-9 years of college.
- ▶ **Pay** – What is the average starting pay? Will this pay meet your needs?
- ▶ **Work environment** – Where do people in this career field work? What are the working conditions and work schedules like?
- ▶ **Job Outlook** – Is this a growing career? Will it be easy to find a job in this career? For example, our nation's healthcare needs are increasing, making healthcare a fast growing career field, with lots of jobs available.

Soft Skills

Soft skills are a combination of people skills, social skills, and communication skills. Soft skills also include character traits such as work ethic and attitude.



Certain soft skills may be essential for success in a specific career. For example, to be a doctor, you need a strong work ethic and the ability to work under pressure.

Think About Your Soft Skills

Below is a list of soft skills employers value. Think about your skills and put a ✓ in the box of the skills you feel good about. Put an X in the box of the skills you need to work on.

- Communication skills
- Leadership skills
- Work ethic
- Adaptability/flexibility
- Time management
- Creativity
- Teamwork skills
- Positive attitude
- Friendliness
- Attention to detail
- Ability to work under pressure

Education Options

Most careers require education or training beyond a general high school education. In many cases, a career choice will point to a specific education option.



For example, someone who wants to be a lawyer needs to go to a four-year college.

Students who haven't chosen a career often know what they want to do (e.g., go to college, join the military). They then consider the careers that option enables them to pursue.

Consider These Five Options

Read about each of these education options and think about which sound best to you.

1. Community and Technical Colleges

These colleges provide affordable, career-oriented programs that enable students to begin their careers after two years of college or less. Students can also start at a community or technical college and then transfer to a four-year college after a year or two.

2. Four-Year Colleges

A four-year college education can open doors and prepare students for financially rewarding careers. Students who want to go to a four-year college should take college prep courses in high school.

Career Plan

Once you've explored your career and education options, take some time to make a career plan.



A career plan is not meant to be set in stone; however, a career plan will help you determine where you want to go, and help you think about how you're going to get there.

How to Create a Career Plan

To create a Career Plan, state your career goal and then list the specific things you need to do to reach your goal.

Olivia is a high school junior and her career goal is to be a paralegal. Here is her career plan:

To reach my career goal to become a paralegal, I will:

- ▶ choose high school courses that will help prepare me for the paralegal program at City Community College
- ▶ find a summer job in an office to get some related work experience
- ▶ apply to City Community College in the fall of my senior year
- ▶ apply for financial aid my senior year
- ▶ live at home and attend college full-time
- ▶ complete the paralegal program in two years with an A/B average
- ▶ start my career as a paralegal as soon as I get my associate's degree