

Planning Your Career

Investing in Yourself



What is the difference between a career and a job? A job is one work experience or activity. You may have a job now while in high school, but you probably don't want to work there for the rest of your life. It is probably just a way to earn some money while you complete your high school education. A career, on the other hand, is a set of work related experiences that you build over a lifetime. Your career is what you will do to earn money over the long term. For many people, their career is a part of who they are – their identity. It is important to find a career that fits you well and to prepare for that career so that you will be successful in it.



Finding a career that is right for you requires some effort and planning. It may sound like common sense, but knowing your likes, dislikes, and abilities is vital to finding a career that fits you. Since you will be spending many hours working over your lifetime, it is important for you to take some time now to think about what you want from a career. Do you want to help people? Do you want to earn a lot of money? Do you want to travel? Do you want to work outside most of the time? Is there a demand for the career you might want to pursue? These are just a few of the questions you should ask yourself when thinking about career paths. Finding the right career is vital to your future happiness and earning potential. No one wants to go to work every day in a position they hate. By taking some time now to think about what you want from your career, you can find a career that is right for you!

Who Are You?

Virginia Education Wizard

<https://www.vawizard.org>

California Career Zone®

<http://www.cacareerzone.org/graphic/index.html>

Rutgers University Career Planning

<http://careerservices.rutgers.edu/PCCPmain.shtml>

There are a lot of self-assessment tools available online. You have to be careful to select legitimate resources that give accurate results. In fact, many employers may require you to take some of these tests before deciding to hire you. It is also good to take tests from several different sources. It is in your best interest to take some of these tests now so that you can find careers that match your personality, interests, values, and aptitudes (abilities). When you take the tests, don't over analyze your answers. Go with your gut reaction in order to get a truer picture of who you are. Another good idea is for you to set up an appointment with your school counselor. They typically have access to a variety of tools that can help you select a career and can guide you in this process.

Here are some websites that you might want to check out.

The first one is the Virginia Education Wizard. This website can help you choose a career and get answers to your questions about your future. It has several assessments that help you evaluate your skills, interests and values.

The California Career Zone® website uses the Holland code to help you explore jobs that match your personality. The Holland Code is a system that is used to classify jobs into job categories, interest groups, or personality environments. Though this site focuses on jobs in California, it is very useful.

Rutgers University Career Planning is another good website for you to use. It allows you to explore your interests, skills, and abilities as a pre-college career-planning site.

Take a few minutes now to check out these websites before continuing with this presentation.

Researching Careers

Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT)

<http://www.onetonline.org/>

Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOH)

<http://www.bls.gov/oco/>

Monthly Labor Review

<http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/>

After you complete your self-assessment process, you will need to research the careers that are of interest to you--ones that match your likes, dislikes, and abilities. You need to look at the training required, the salary or wage you can expect to receive, the duties you will be required to perform, and the projected outlook for that profession. The government has several good websites and publications where you can find this information.

- The first one, the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles* (DOT), is one of these sites. This site gives you information about career clusters--various careers that fit into nine different categories. DOT also provides links to other resources with more detailed information on specific careers.
- The *Occupational Outlook Handbook* (OOH) is published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. This website provides detailed information about many different careers.
- The Bureau of Labor Statistics also publishes a monthly report on various careers called the *Monthly Labor Review*. This site gives up-to-date, detailed information about specific careers.

These three government publications can also be found in your public library.

You may also want to return to the Virginia Education Wizard website to research careers.