

ABILITIES AND SKILLS

Considering your abilities, skills, and talents is very important when determining which careers will be a good match for you. You are likely to be much happier and more successful in a career that focuses on your strengths!

Abilities and Skills

Sasha is thinking about being a science teacher, but isn't sure if she'd be good at it. She wrote down the skills, abilities, and traits she thinks a good teacher should have, and she checked off the ones she feels are a good match for her. Sasha put an X next the skills she needs to improve, and then thought about what she could do to work on them.

Skills a Science Teacher Needs

Good with people ✓

Patient ✓

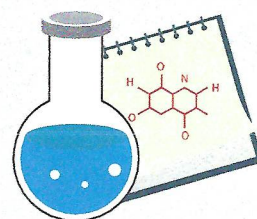
Creative ✓

Public Speaking ✗ Speak up in class more

Organized ✓

Good at science ✓

Good at explaining things to people ✗ Tutor my sister



Try it!

Choose a career you're interested in (or choose a career from the top of the following page) and make a list of the traits, skills, and abilities you believe are necessary for that career—like Sasha did above. Check off the ones you have, and put an X next to the ones you don't have yet. Beside the ones with an X, write down something you can do to help develop it.

YOUR ABILITIES

Considering your abilities, skills, and talents is very important when determining which careers will be a good match for you. You are likely to be much happier and more successful in a career that focuses on your strengths!

What abilities do you have?

When thinking about your abilities and how they relate to a career, a good place to start is to think about what school subjects you do well in. What are your two best school subjects?

Your aptitudes, talents, and skills

Aptitudes and talents are things you're naturally good at. For example some students seem to find it easy to learn a foreign language. They have an aptitude for languages. Students who can draw really well have artistic talent.



Of course, aptitudes and talents don't do you much good unless you work to develop your skills! For example, a basketball player may have a lot of natural athletic ability, but to be good, he/she has to work hard on shooting, dribbling, and more. And students who have artistic talent will only become good artists if they take classes and work to develop their artistic skills.

What is a skill or talent you want to work on developing this year? _____

What will you do to help develop it? _____

Remember... What you're good at doing now can and will change and develop as you grow, but considering your abilities now can help you identify what career areas you may want to explore first.

Your Values

Your values are what's important to you. They are the things that make a career or job meaningful and worthwhile to you.

Go through the list below and rate how important each one is to you in a career.

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
1. Make good money	☐	☐	☐
2. Have ideal work hours	☐	☐	☐
3. Work inside	☐	☐	☐
4. Have work that's creative	☐	☐	☐
5. Work independently	☐	☐	☐
6. Have job security	☐	☐	☐
7. Have exciting work	☐	☐	☐
8. Be in charge	☐	☐	☐
9. Work with others	☐	☐	☐
10. Work outdoors	☐	☐	☐
11. Make a difference	☐	☐	☐
12. Have opportunities for advancement	☐	☐	☐

Which of the above values are most important to you? Why?

Planning Your Future

What careers or career fields do you think might be a good match for you?

What do you think will be the best way for you to prepare for your career?

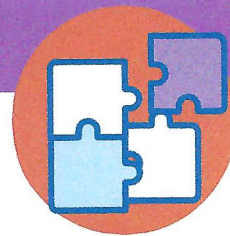
Having career and educational plans can provide you with focus and motivation, but remember, as you grow and learn more about yourself and your choices, you can always change your goals and your plans.

What can you do between now and the time you graduate to help you achieve your career and educational goals—and ensure that your future is bright and full of possibilities?

FINAL WORDS

The best way to create a future that's bright and full of options is to get a good education. Work hard in school, get the best grades you can, and you will have a future that is full of possibilities!

TYPES OF CAREERS



Exploring different types of careers is important because the perfect career field just might be one you've never considered.

To make career exploration easier, careers with common features are grouped into Clusters. Look through the 16 Career Clusters below and put a ✓ by those you might be interested in.

- ☐ **Agriculture, Food, & Natural Resources:** farm, fish, and work to improve the environment
- ☐ **Arts, A/V Tech & Communication:** design, create, perform, and produce multimedia content
- ☐ **Architecture & Construction:** design, build, and maintain homes and structures
- ☐ **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 and Public Administration:** make laws and provide public services
- ☐ **Health Science:** work in healthcare treating people
- ☐ **Hospitality & Tourism:** work in restaurants, hotels, and casinos
- ☐ **Human Services:** help people through counseling, social work, and more
- ☐ **Information Technology:** work with computers, software, and network systems
- ☐ **Law, Public Safety, Corrections, & Security:** keep people safe and enforce laws
- ☐ **Manufacturing:** make products on a large scale using machinery, such as in a factory
- ☐ **Marketing:** promote and sell goods and services
- ☐ **Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics (STEM):** use math and science to do research and solve problems
- ☐ **Transportation, Distribution, & Logistics:** transport people and goods from one place to another by car, truck, airplane, or train

Choose one of the Career Clusters you checked and write why you think the careers in this Cluster are ones you might want to consider for yourself.

SOFT SKILLS AND CAREERS

Considering your abilities, skills, and personality is very important when determining which careers will be a good match for you. You are likely to be much happier and more successful in a career that focuses on your strengths!

The importance of soft skills

In addition to having skills in reading, writing, math, etc., having good soft skills will help you succeed in school, in a career, and in life.

Soft skills are a combination of people skills, communication skills, and character traits. You can work to develop these important skills when you're in the classroom, involved in activities, and with friends and family.

Read through the list of soft skills below and check off the four that best describe you.

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|
| ☐ Patient | ☐ Creative | ☐ Problem solver |
| ☐ Curious | ☐ Honest | ☐ Strong work ethic |
| ☐ Kind | ☐ Dependable | ☐ Friendly |
| ☐ Adaptable | ☐ Determined | ☐ Positive attitude |
| ☐ Good listener | ☐ Responsible | ☐ Organized |

Certain soft skills are especially important for specific careers. For instance, if you want to be a doctor, you need to have a strong work ethic and be able to work under pressure. While you might not know what career you want to go into quite yet, you can still think about how the traits you have might help you choose a career that would be a good for you.

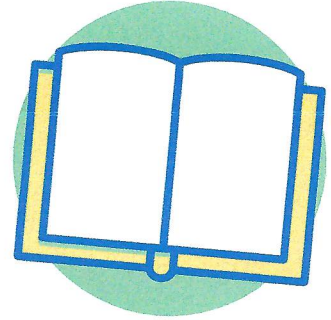
Choose one of the above soft skills that you would like to work on and improve.

Which one did you choose? _____

Why did you choose this soft skill?

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.

3. Career and Trade Schools

Career and trade schools offer short-term training in a wide variety of career fields. Some programs last only a few weeks; others take up to two years.

4. The Military

As the nation's largest employer, the military offers applicants a salary, benefits, and free job training. The military also provides discipline, structure, and opportunities for career advancement and travel.

5. Apprenticeships

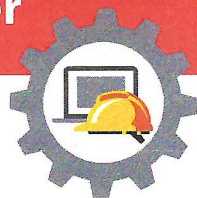
Students who prefer a hands-on approach to learning may want to consider an apprenticeship program. Apprentices learn their trade through a combination of classroom instruction and on-the-job training.

What Do You Think?

Consider each of the education/training options below and check **Yes** (this is what you want to do), **Maybe** (you'd like to learn more), or **No** (you don't want to do this).

1. Community College	☐ Yes	☐ Maybe	☐ No
2. Four-Year College	☐ Yes	☐ Maybe	☐ No
3. Career/Trade School	☐ Yes	☐ Maybe	☐ No
4. The Military	☐ Yes	☐ Maybe	☐ No
5. Apprenticeship	☐ Yes	☐ Maybe	☐ No

Why did you make these choices?



Career or Trade School

Why attend a career or trade school?

Students today can prepare for many high growth careers by going to a career or trade school.

- ▶ Career and trade schools focus on teaching students the skills they need for a specific career.
- ▶ If you know what career you want to pursue, going to a career or trade school might be the right choice for you.

What is a career/trade school like?

Training is available in a variety of careers

Career and trade schools offer training for a large number of careers. Many of the most popular programs are in healthcare, business, computer science, and hospitality.

Students receive hands-on instruction

Students spend the majority of their class time in job-related settings where they receive hands-on training from experienced instructors. The student-teacher ratio is low, and students generally receive a great deal of individual attention.

Programs vary in length

While some programs take one or two years to complete, others can be completed in a matter of weeks.



VIDEO

2-year colleges offer many of the same programs. For information on 2-year colleges, watch this quick video!

What should I know about career/trade schools?

Costs vary greatly

While these schools can be expensive, their costs vary depending on the school and the program.

All high school graduates are accepted

A high school diploma (or GED) is generally all that's required for acceptance to a career or trade school. Schools are looking for students who have good basic skills and a desire to learn.

Credits usually do not transfer

Because career and trade schools vary tremendously, their credits usually are not accepted by two- and four-year colleges.

How do I choose the right school?

Not all career and trade schools are reputable. It is, therefore, important for you to thoroughly investigate the schools you're considering. Use these guidelines to help you evaluate any career or trade school.

- ▶ **Licensing and Accreditation** – Is the school accredited, and by whom? Be wary of any school that is not accredited.
- ▶ **Facilities** – Is the equipment up-to-date? What are the buildings and classrooms like?
- ▶ **Placement** – What percentage of their graduates find a job? What are their starting salaries?
- ▶ **Cost** – What is the total cost of tuition, fees, and supplies? Is financial aid available?
- ▶ **Quality of Instruction** – Are the courses and books up-to-date? What are the qualifications of the instructors?
- ▶ **Reputation and Stability** – How long has the school been in operation? What percentage of the students finish their program?



Education Alternatives

What is an education alternative?

Some students may not be mentally or financially ready for the rigors of college, the military, or another post-graduate option. These students may choose to get a job and receive on-the-job training, or put their plans on hold and take a gap year. Here are some tips on how to make the most of these two options.

On-the-Job Training

Students may choose on-the-job training (OJT) to gain experience in a job field, while also making some money for college. OJT is short-term training designed to teach you what you need to know to perform a specific job. To make the most of your training, do the following:

- ▶ **Find a job in a field you're considering.**
For example, if you want a career in the fashion industry, try to get a job at a clothing store.
- ▶ **Increase your chances for advancement.**
Be polite, enthusiastic, and willing to learn. Have excellent attendance, and make every effort to get along with your co-workers and supervisors.
- ▶ **Consider additional education/training.**
Remember, you can still take a course or two, even though you don't want to attend college full-time just yet. Taking an online or in-person class will help you keep your skills sharp.



VIDEO

For info on education options,
watch this quick video!

Gap Year

A gap year is a “break” that some students choose to take in between graduating from high school and beginning a career or going to college. A gap year can last anywhere from one semester to one year, and may include travel, an internship, volunteering, and/or experiential learning.

Gap Year Positives

A gap year can have many positive personal and academic benefits. It can...

- ▶ help you gain a better understanding of what you want to study.
- ▶ give you time to become more independent, confident, and mature.
- ▶ provide opportunities to develop a deeper understanding of the world and other cultures.
- ▶ give you time to recharge and recover after the rigors of high school.

Gap Year Negatives

Here are a few negative aspects to consider.

A gap year can...

- ▶ cause you to lose academic momentum.
- ▶ allow your academic skills to become rusty.
- ▶ be expensive.
- ▶ cause you to feel out of sync with your peers.

It's important to remember that a true gap year is not a year “off.” Rather, it's a time for learning, exploration, and growth—a “bridge” between high school and your next step, whether that's beginning a career or going to college.

If you are thinking about college following a gap year, check with the schools you are considering to find out their gap year policy. Some schools will allow one year of deferred admission.

Visit gapyearassociation.org for more information, and to see a list of gap year opportunities.



Military

Why join the military?

The United States military is the country's largest employer. Here are some benefits of enlisting:

- ▶ The military offers training in over 2,000 jobs, most of which have civilian counterparts.
- ▶ Most enlistees begin at pay grade E-1 and receive about \$1,680 a month. Pay increases steadily with rank and years of service.
- ▶ Enlistees get free housing and free medical care.
- ▶ Under the Montgomery GI Bill, enlistees who contribute to a college fund can receive \$50,000+ for college.

What are some of the options?

Enlistees generally sign up for four years of active duty. These are the military's main branches:

Army

Founded in 1775, the Army is the oldest and largest branch of the armed services. The Army is primarily responsible for land-based military operations.

Navy

The Navy's mission is to maintain, train, and equip combat-ready naval forces, and to protect and defend our right to move freely on the oceans. The US Navy is the largest navy in the world.

Air Force

The Air Force became a separate military service in 1947. It includes aviation forces for both service and combat. Air Force troops are organized, trained, and equipped for offensive and defensive air operations.

Marine Corps

The Marine Corps specializes in amphibious operations, rapid deployment, and self-sufficiency. An elite fighting force with close ties to the Navy, the Marine Corps is often first on the ground in conflicts.

Coast Guard

The Coast Guard is primarily concerned with sea rescue, law enforcement, boating safety, and illegal immigration control. During wartime, the Coast Guard can become part of the Navy.

What are the qualifications?

Basic qualifications

- ▶ High school diploma (GED candidates have limited opportunities)
- ▶ 18 years old (17 with parental consent)
- ▶ US citizen or permanent resident alien
- ▶ Good physical condition, including appropriate weight and ability to pass a physical exam

ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery)

- ▶ The ASVAB is a 3-hour test designed to identify a person's aptitudes, abilities, and strengths.
- ▶ To enlist in any branch of the military, one must earn a minimum score on the ASVAB.
- ▶ Recruiters generally make the testing arrangements and interpret ASVAB scores. Each military branch has its own score requirements.
- ▶ The higher a person's scores, the more career and training options they will have.

For more information

The best way to learn about the military is to talk to a recruiter. The career, training, and educational opportunities are different for each branch. For more information on opportunities in the military, go to todaysmilitary.com.



VIDEO

To review, watch this quick video!

woodburnpress.com

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