

Self-Assessment

To be successful in a career, you need to do something you enjoy and do well. 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?

Consider Your Abilities

Below is a list of things people often do at a job. Put a ✓ in the boxes next to the tasks you think you'd be good at.

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ talk to people | ☐ work with your hands |
| ☐ work with computers | ☐ write reports |
| ☐ be creative | ☐ do math |
| ☐ work with money | ☐ help people |
| ☐ organize events | ☐ do physical work |
| ☐ train or teach others | ☐ work in a lab |

Consider Your Values

Put a ✓ in the boxes next to the things that are important to you in a career.

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ adventure | ☐ making a difference |
| ☐ helping others | ☐ working outside |
| ☐ high income | ☐ working with people |
| ☐ challenge | ☐ good working conditions |
| ☐ job security | ☐ creative work |
| ☐ physical activity | ☐ working alone |
| ☐ travel | ☐ prestige |

Which will be a good fit?

When considering your interests, abilities, and values, which of these career areas do you think might be a good fit for you?

- _____ Business
- _____ Healthcare
- _____ Education
- _____ High-tech/computers
- _____ Human services (child care, law enforcement)
- _____ Skilled trades (plumbing, carpentry)
- _____ Arts (music, dance, art, theater)

Choose one of the above and learn as much as you can about the careers in that area.

Name _____

Your Education Options

Maybe you already have a chosen education option, or perhaps you have a career in mind but aren't sure how to prepare for it. It's important that you consider all of your options!

Answer the questions to see how much you know. (Answers are on the following page.)

Two-Year College

Two-year colleges provide career-oriented one- and two-year programs. Public two-year colleges are often called community colleges.

1. To be accepted at a two-year college, you must take certain college-prep courses in high school. T ☐ F ☐
2. One year at a public two-year college and one year at a public four-year college generally cost about the same. T ☐ F ☐
3. You can start at a public two-year college and transfer after a year or two to a four-year college. T ☐ F ☐

Four-Year College

A four-year college education (bachelor's degree) can prepare you for a wide range of careers.

4. You need to have at least a B average in high school to go to a four-year college. T ☐ F ☐
5. College students spend less time in class than high school students. T ☐ F ☐
6. If you pay your college bills, you can continue at a four-year college as long as you like, regardless of your grades. T ☐ F ☐

Career/Trade School

Career and trade schools offer short-term training in a variety of career fields.

7. Career and trade schools all cost about the same. T ☐ F ☐
8. Career and trade school programs are all two-year programs. T ☐ F ☐
9. All career/trade schools provide their students with a quality education. T ☐ F ☐

Apprenticeship

Apprentices learn a skilled trade through class instruction and on-the-job training.

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|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 10. Apprentices don't earn any money during the first six months. | T ☐ | F ☐ |
| 11. Most apprenticeship programs are four-year programs. | T ☐ | F ☐ |
| 12. Apprenticeship programs generally require that an applicant be 18 years old and a high school graduate. | T ☐ | F ☐ |

The Military

The U.S. military offers enlistees free job training in over 2,000 job specialties.

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|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 13. If you enlist in the military, you are obligated to 10 years of active duty. | T ☐ | F ☐ |
| 14. As an enlistee, you get free medical care and housing. | T ☐ | F ☐ |
| 15. The U.S. military is the nation's largest employer. | T ☐ | F ☐ |

Given what you know now, indicate how you feel about each of the following. Check **Yes** (this is how you want to prepare for your career), **Maybe** (you'd like to learn more), or **No** (you don't think this option is for you).

- | | | | |
|------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. 2-Year College | ☐ Yes | ☐ Maybe | ☐ No |
| 2. 4-Year College | ☐ Yes | ☐ Maybe | ☐ No |
| 3. Career/trade school | ☐ Yes | ☐ Maybe | ☐ No |
| 4. Apprenticeship | ☐ Yes | ☐ Maybe | ☐ No |
| 5. The military | ☐ Yes | ☐ Maybe | ☐ No |

Why did you choose this option? _____

1. False - 2-year public colleges do not require specific courses for admissions. 2. False - A 4-year college generally costs more than twice as much as a 2-year public college. 3. True 4. False - 4-year colleges look for students with good grades, but they do not have a specific grade requirement. 5. True 6. False - All 4-year colleges have academic requirements students must meet to stay enrolled. 7. False - Costs vary greatly. 8. False - Some programs last a few weeks; others can last years. 9. False - Some career/trade schools aren't reputable. Career and trade schools need to be checked out carefully. 10. False - Apprentices start off earning about one-half what experienced workers earn. 11. True 12. True 13. False - You are most often obligated for 4 years of active duty. 14. True 15. True

Name _____

Explore Your Career Options

Below are some of the most popular careers. Circle three or more careers on the list that you would like to learn more about. Then complete the activity below.

Accountant	Dental hygienist	Meteorologist	Psychologist
Actor/actress	Dentist	Musician	Salesperson
Architect	Electrician	News broadcaster	Secretary
Artist	Engineer	Nurse	Social worker
Athletic trainer	Environmentalist	Paralegal	Software developer
Biologist	Fashion designer	Paramedic	Stockbroker
Botanist	Firefighter	Pharmacist	Systems analyst
Broadcaster	Flight attendant	Photographer	Teacher
Carpenter	Forester	Physical therapist	Truck driver
Chemist	Interior designer	Physician	Veterinarian
Chiropractor	Lawyer	Police officer	Web developer
Computer programmer	Medical technician	Politician	Writer

Most careers have certain skills or traits that are important for success. For example, a paramedic needs to be good at science and able to work under pressure. Choose two of the careers you circled (or other careers you're interested in) and list five traits or skills you think you would need to be successful in that career.

Career: _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Career: _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Prepare for a Career

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.

Taking a 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.