

Build Your Future

choices...
connections...
careers



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Career Journal

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Introduction

Welcome to Build Your Future: Choices, Connections, Careers.

When you think about your future are you excited, scared or apprehensive?

Do you know what you want to do, but you're not sure how to get there?

When you think of doing career building activities, what do you expect?

One teen who completed activities in this curriculum said, "I thought career activities would be boring, but it was fun." Some teens like doing career activities, others don't, and still others want to hurry up and get a job. This Career Journal is your guide to help you develop the skills and knowledge you need to build your future.

When we start to take steps to build our future, we set goals, learn what we like and don't like, and find out what careers match those choices and connections. We discover what kind of education we need and how to fund it. We learn about salaries and benefits a career may offer and how that fits with our goals. We explore a career through research, job shadowing and volunteering, and discover what we like and don't like. We learn the skills to find a job and see what it takes to keep it. Or, we learn to develop business plans and create the job we want by becoming an entrepreneur. All of these things and more are a part of this curriculum.

This journal, along with the activities you do with your career facilitator, will help you build towards a successful future. The activities will give you "hands-on" ways to find out what type of career you want, while others help you apply to a job today!

So grab your career journal, find your career facilitator and get ready for your future!

Making Career Connections

2 ACTIVITY

Opening Question

How long has it been since you asked yourself what you want to be when you grow up?

- If you haven't considered the question since you were 5 years old, it's time to think about who you are and what you want to be.
- The process of uncovering what you are meant to do and finding your career direction is a journey on a path you choose and research.
- It starts by exploring the vast array of opportunities in front of you and matching them to your talents, strengths, and interests.
- There are many ways to gain information about and insight into careers and determine what career would be a good fit for you.

In This Activity...

You will:

- increase your knowledge of careers by researching and exploring careers through various methods.
- work with your group facilitator as he or she guides you through the following pages during Activity 2.

Some Ways to Explore Careers Are...

- Research specific career pathways.
- Interview people who are employed in an occupation.
- Job shadow someone in a career that appeals to you.
- Serve an internship with a business or organization.
- Volunteer with an organization, doing tasks relevant to your possible future career.
- Attend a career fair or a job fair.

Making Career Connections: Careers Research Worksheet

Complete this table using one of the careers you identified in **Activity 1, Skills...Choices... Careers**, using the worksheet **Exploring Career Pathways: Get to Know Yourself**.

LIST THE CAREER YOU WANT TO RESEARCH

Describe this career. What do people in this profession do?

What personal characteristics, qualities, skills, and abilities are needed to work in this career?

What education is required for this career? Are there any special requirements such as licensing or certification?

What education programs and institutions could prepare you for this career?

What is the average annual salary for this career?

What are the working conditions and physical demands of this career?
(Examples include location inside or outside, hours, flexibility, stress level, lifting requirements, danger level.)



Making Career Connections: Careers Research Worksheet(cont.)

LIST THE CAREER YOU WANT TO RESEARCH

Find and list at least one position in this career that's available now.	
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What are the benefits (such as health and travel) of this career?	
---	--

What are the future prospects and outlook for this career?	
--	--

What are two or more characteristics of this position that appeal to you?	
---	--

What steps must you take to prepare yourself to work in this position?	
--	--



Resources

Go online to find recommended website to help you get started in your exploration of careers.

www.4-H.org/curriculum/careers

Making Career Connections: Interview a Worker Worksheet

You can find a wealth of information about a career by speaking with someone already working in the career. Find a person in one of your identified careers to interview by asking your current connections (friends, parents, teachers, neighbors, or others) for suggestions. Or expand your connections by seeking out people in the local chamber of commerce, professional associations, community organizations, or Internet searches. Once you've identified someone to interview, call the individual, tell him or her that you want to explore their career, and ask to make an appointment for an interview. Use the following questions to guide you as you prepare your own list of questions.

Person Interviewed: _____ **Career:** _____

What are the general duties of your occupation?

Describe your typical workday or workweek.

How did you get into this career?

What do you like most about your career?

How much and what type of education did you need for this job? Did you need any special license or certification?



Making Career Connections: Interview a Worker Worksheet (cont.)

What did you learn in school that has helped you most on your job?

What technology do you use in your work?

What computer skills do you need for your job?

How are listening and speaking skills important in your job?

How are reading and writing skills important in your job?

How do you use math in your job?

What kind of problems do you solve on the job?

Making Career Connections: Interview a Worker Worksheet (cont.)

What problems occur most frequently in your job?

What current issues are people in your field facing?

What advice would you give someone pursuing a career in your field?



REFLECTION:

Answer the final two questions yourself after the interview.

What appeals to you most about this position or career pathway?

What steps must you take to prepare yourself for this position or career pathway?

Making Career Connections: Job Shadow a Worker Worksheet

Job shadowing is a lot like interviewing, except you get to observe the professional in action. During a job shadowing experience, you follow a professional through his or her workday. You get first-hand knowledge of the demands of the job, the culture of the workplace, the tasks performed, and the people encountered. And you still get to ask lots of questions!

You can job shadow someone for a few hours, a day, a week, or even longer, depending on what you can arrange with the person you've chosen to shadow.

Person shadowed: _____ Career field: _____

In the chart below, list three work activities the person performed during your shadowing experience. Then answer the questions: Would you enjoy doing these tasks every day? Why or why not?

Work Activity	Would you enjoy doing this every day?	Why or why not?



Making Career Connections: Job Shadow a Worker Worksheet (cont.)

What did the person spend the most time doing while you observed him or her?

From your observations, what personal characteristics are needed for someone to be successful in this occupation?

What kind of people did this person interact with while you were observing him or her?

What did you learn about the personality type that would be successful interacting with coworkers and supervisors, or with clients and customers?



Making Career Connections: Job Shadow a Worker Worksheet (cont.)

What problems or obstacles did this person encounter while you were shadowing him or her?
How was the problem solved?

What does this person enjoy about their job?

How did this person get into this field of work?

REFLECTION:

What are two or more characteristics of this position or career pathway that appeal to you?

What steps must you take to prepare yourself to work in this position or career pathway?

Making Career Connections: Volunteer or Internship

Volunteering

Volunteering for a business or organization is a win-win way to explore jobs and careers. The business benefits from your work and you gain many benefits. It provides you with the opportunity to explore and learn about a job, business, or career while providing a service. Depending on the volunteer role you take on, you may even learn or enhance some of the skills needed for a career path. The connections and networking you experience as a volunteer may lead to future job opportunities. Your volunteer experiences should be included in your résumé or portfolio.

Susan J. Ellis, president of Energize, wrote in "Volunteering to Explore Career Possibilities": "Volunteering is career exploration only if you consciously select assignments that:

- place you in the type of setting you want to learn about.
- let you work alongside professionals as you observe and ask questions about their career.
- allow you to get as much hands-on training as possible.
- provide opportunities to be promoted to more-challenging tasks so you can use the experience to document your accomplishments."

Internships

Interning is another hands-on way to explore career options. Internships can be formal or informal, paid or unpaid. Most are unpaid. Internships involve working in your planned career field. Besides gaining valuable experience, you will be exposed to the business environment, obtain valuable references, build a network of professional contacts, and have something tangible to show on your résumé.

Tips for finding volunteer or internship opportunities

- Think hometown. If you are interested in radio and television jobs, try dropping by your local news radio station or community access channel.
- Ask local business associations what internships are available in your community. Don't give up if these companies don't formally list an internship or volunteer program for high school students.
- Try to identify a human resources representative or department manager at workplaces of interest.
- Even if an employer doesn't have a formal internship or volunteer program, they may take you up on your offer of help. Show that you're passionate about their business or organization and are willing to spend time working for them.
- You can find a business, corporation, or organization on the Internet and search its website for internship opportunities.

