

Career Paths and Job Opportunities

Job Exploration Counseling Benchmark:

Gain knowledge of career paths and job opportunities including the necessary skills and qualifications to be successful.

Note to those providing this service:

These activities are developed in a way that allows the learner to gradually build upon their skills. Each student has different foundational skills so some students may need more support or instruction than others. With that being said, you can choose what activity you start with based on the learner's strengths and needs.



Extended Pathways

Students who are interested or enrolled in career and technical education (CTE) or postsecondary, regardless of disability (remember to presume competence!), may or may not need some of the information that seems introductory in nature. Take as much or little time as needed based on student knowledge. More specific activities related to CTE and postsecondary are identified as extended activities and pathways.

Preparation and Materials Needed:

- Know the student's knowledge or awareness regarding career paths (this helps with knowing how much time may need to be spent on an activity).
- Prepare needed assistive technologies and/or accommodations (ex. communication supports (visual, objects, pictures, voice output devices, etc.), physical supports/space access needs, vision supports, hearing supports, sensory needs/supports).
- Computer or materials printed in advance.



Print

- [Career Paths Vocabulary \(PowerPoint\)](#)
- [Student Career Profile](#)



Activities to Meet Benchmarks:

Activity 1: Review Vocabulary Words

This activity aims to review vocabulary related to career paths.




Review: Vocabulary list is arranged from foundational to more detailed. Feel free to modify the vocabulary list to meet the student's needs.



Resource: [Career Paths Vocabulary \(PowerPoint\)](#)

- **Education:** The process of learning and gaining knowledge, usually through school or special training. It helps prepare you for future jobs and life skills. Some training and postsecondary programs have academic advisors who help you match your interests and skills with a major.
- **Industry Recognized Credential:** Certificate or qualification that is gained from education or training. It shows to employers that you have knowledge or skills for a specific job. Stacking credentials is earning multiple certificates that build on each other to increase skills and career advancement.
- **Skills:** Specific things you can do well, usually learned through practice and experience. Skills can be job-related (like using a computer program) or general (like public speaking). The more you practice a skill, the better you get at it.
- **Occupation:** The type of work you do to earn money. It's your job or career, like being a teacher, chef, or engineer.
- **Career:** Jobs and occupations over time in a specific field. This is typically a goal based on strengths and abilities. A Career Pathway is the steps, like education, training, and work experience, you can take to reach your career goal.
- **Abilities:** Natural talents or strengths you have. These are things you're naturally good at, like being creative, solving problems quickly, or working well in a team.
- **Job Requirements:** The things needed for a job, which can include skills, education, physical abilities, or costs associated with getting that job.
- **Hourly Wage:** The amount of money an employee earns for each hour that they
- **Salary:** Money you get for doing your job. It is usually a yearly set amount paid in smaller increments throughout the year.
- **Assistive Technology:** Devices or tools that help people with disabilities perform tasks more easily, allowing them to work better and participate fully in the workplace.
- **Entry Level Position:** Jobs that require little to no work experience. This is often a way to gain experience and lay the groundwork for a career.

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- **In-Demand Careers:** Refers to jobs or skills currently needed or wanted by employers and likely to be available soon.
 - **Labor Market:** The labor market refers to the supply and demand for labor, where employers seek workers to fill job positions and individuals offer their skills and services in exchange for wages. It includes all the available jobs in an economy and the people who are looking for work.
 - **Non-Traditional Employment:** Job opportunities that differ from standard jobs, such as self-employment or freelance work, which may not follow the usual 9-to-5 schedule.
 - **Apprenticeships:** A way to learn a job or trade by working with experienced professionals. You learn by doing the actual work while also taking some classes. These help you learn skills needed to work and build connections with others.
 - **Internships:** A temporary position where you gain experience in a specific field while still in school, or just starting a career. It typically involves working on real projects and may or may not be paid.

Activity 2: How to Research Careers

This activity aims to demonstrate how to research labor market information.



Discuss: Throughout Job Exploration Counseling, we have completed activities to gather ideas of who you are, what you like to do, what you value and skills you have. Some jobs and careers require a lot of experience or knowledge, while others do not. One of the ways you can find out more information about a job or career is through on-line research. Often you can find information about the tasks of a job, the skills or education needed, even if there are jobs available near you.



Navigate to [Career OneStop](#) and ensure students can see and follow along.

- I am going to show you how to find this kind of information. This is just an example, but you can also find information for any career or job you may be interested in. I'm on Career OneStop and for this example, if you type 'zoo' and hit enter in the 'Search by Occupation' box, a list of related occupations will appear, which is why you see Animal Caretakers, Veterinarians, and General and Operations Managers.
- We also need to type in our city and state or zip code. This makes sure it gives us information specific to where we are.
- For this example, let's click on Animal Caretakers. There's a description of what they do and other types of career or job titles. There's also a short video (transcript also available) we can watch about this career. If you continue to scroll down the page, you will see statistics or data related to job openings in this area of Ohio, wage information, and educational, certificate, or licensure requirements. As I continue, it lists activities, skills, abilities, knowledge. So, as you go through this information, you may decide this is not the right career for you or want to explore similar careers. There's a section at the bottom of each page listing related occupations that you can explore.



Click and Explore: A great Ohio resource to explore is [Career Clusters](#) through OhioMeansJobs.

This link lists occupations by career fields. For this example, scroll down and click on Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources. This will take you to different jobs in this career field, ranging from Entry level to Intermediate to Expert. Click on an occupation to learn more about that career pathway, education, stacking credentials, and experience needed.

Activity 3: What is Your Dream Job?

This activity aims to help students understand there are different skills and qualifications needed for various jobs



Watch: [Your Career \(Video - 1:30min\)](#)



Discuss: In the video you saw how Jennifer used her past experiences and hobbies to create a career she loved. A career can look different from person to person. Some careers require you to go to college (you may already be in college!), some might require you to obtain a particular certification or special training, while other jobs you can get right out of high school with a diploma. As you get older your experiences will help shape your perspective and influence your choices – including the career you have!

Try using these different prompting questions to continue or start conversation.

- What job or career do you dream of having when you graduate?
- What do you think you will need to do to become a _____?



Extending the Conversation

- What type of coursework/certification program/classes will you need?
- What apprenticeships or internships could you participate in?



Click and Explore: Below are a list of resources to learn more about apprenticeships and internships for students who are interested in learning more and if service time allows.

- [Why Apprenticeship? | OhioMeansJobs](#)
 - Using your OMJ log-in, this is a place to check out more information on the benefit of apprenticeships.
- [Apprenticeship Dashboard | Ohio Department of Job and Family Services](#)
 - This dashboard shows where apprenticeship programs are located and by industry.
- [Internships Lead to Jobs | OhioMeansJobs](#)
 - Information related to the benefit of internships and how to prepare.
- [Ohio's High School Tech Internship Program](#)
 - This internship information is for students still in high school, are 19 years old or less, and interested in technology
- [Internships & Co-ops | The Ohio Department of Higher Education](#)
 - Information on internships and cooperative education, known as co-ops, opportunities in Ohio for students in college



Extended Pathways

Activity: Interests and Work Values



Discuss: Now that you have identified your personal values, characteristics, and more using an Interest Inventory, it's important to make sure you are aligning these values with decisions about internships, apprenticeships, and other job trial locations. Many students who complete an internship or apprenticeship end up working at the same company, so choosing an internship, apprenticeship, or other job trial location is important.



Review your [Work Values](#) result from Why Employment Matters, your interest inventory, and/or [Self-Evaluation Worksheet](#) and prioritize your top values, characteristics, and other interests.



Reflect: As you look for internship, apprenticeships, or other job trial locations, consider the employer or business and how they may align with your interests. Are there certain industries you want to avoid? Are there certain companies that align perfectly with your values?

Explore yourself or discuss with an academic advisor how you may select an internship, apprenticeship, or other job trial location that aligns with your Self-Evaluation Worksheet.



Resource: Add to Your [Student Career Profile](#) - Interests and Work Values.



Wrap-Up:

It is important to know that as we gain more experiences, learn new things, grow and mature—we change and evolve. This means we may like new things and dislike things we previously enjoyed doing. We may develop new skills and hold different values. We may change our course of study or major. This does not make us a bad person—it is normal and should be seen as a positive thing! Just because you may want to do this job now, you can change your mind and go in a different direction later. That is why it is important to understand who you are, what you value, and what skills you have so that you can find a career that helps you lean into those things and find a job that makes you happy.