

Career Path Selection

SELECTING a career path that suits your skills and interests is important. This choice will define your day-to-day activities, how much money you earn, and your general lifestyle. It is one of the most important decisions you will make as an adult. Most people spend a great deal of time trying to figure out what their career should be, and many change career paths multiple times. Knowing yourself can help you make the right choice for your career and your future.



Objective:



Identify the information necessary to select a career path.

Key Terms:



achievement

altruism

aptitudes

clerical speed and accuracy

creativity

financial success

independence

interests

manual dexterity

mechanical reasoning

numerical aptitude

security

spatial visualization

surroundings

variety

verbal aptitude

work values

Career Choice Information

You will spend a great deal of your adult life at work, so choosing a career path that best suits your skills and interests is vital. Knowing yourself can help determine a career choice that will be satisfying. Three types of information can aid in this choice: aptitudes, interests, and values.

APTITUDES

Aptitudes are natural abilities/skills. Certain aptitudes can help you complete certain tasks or jobs easier and more efficiently. Explore six common aptitudes: verbal aptitude, numerical

aptitude, clerical speed and accuracy, manual dexterity, mechanical reasoning, and spatial visualization.

- ◆ **Verbal aptitude** is using spoken and/or written words well.
- ◆ **Numerical aptitude** is being able to do math quickly and accurately.
- ◆ **Clerical speed and accuracy** is being able to pick out letters or words quickly and to arrange number/letter combinations in order.
- ◆ **Manual dexterity** is being able to move hands and/or feet quickly and accurately.
- ◆ **Mechanical reasoning** is being able to understand how things work.
- ◆ **Spatial visualization** is being able to form mental pictures of shapes, sizes, and/or positions of objects.

Aptitudes can be determined by a test or by examining your grades. You tend to enjoy and receive good grades in subjects in which you excel. Therefore, look at your grades to determine what aptitudes you may possess.

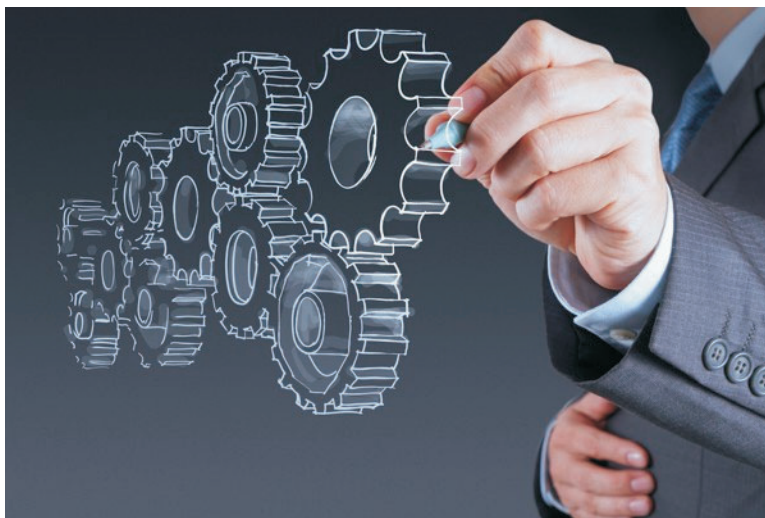


FIGURE 1. Mechanical reasoning involves being able to understand how things work.

WHAT YOU LIKE

Interests are things that a person likes to do. If you could do anything you wanted, what would you do? What are your hobbies? What do you like to do during your free time? The answers to these questions are your interests. Choosing a career that interests you will be much more satisfying than one that does not. Most people are more passionate, hardworking, and dedicated if they are interested in their work. Taking your interests into account will help you determine your ideal career path.



FIGURE 2. What are some of your interests?



DIGGING DEEPER...

UNCOVERING ADDITIONAL FACTS: Aptitude Testing

One of the most popular ways to determine your aptitudes is through aptitude testing. Various tests can be taken. After completion, your ideal career will be revealed. For more information, research companies that provide aptitude testing. Find out how their tests are administered and if any costs or fees are involved.

VALUES

Work values are feelings about the importance of an activity or occupation. Below are examples of things you may value and can achieve through work.

- ◆ **Altruism** is helping others.
- ◆ **Creativity** is designing, inventing, and creating new ideas or things.
- ◆ **Achievement** is a feeling of accomplishment or a job well done.
- ◆ **Independence** is being able to and/or wanting to work alone or in a specific way.
- ◆ **Financial success** is earning enough to buy what you want.
- ◆ **Security** is having a steady job.
- ◆ **Surroundings** are the type of work environment.
- ◆ **Variety** is the ability to do a variety of tasks.

Which of these values is most important to you? Which is least important? The answers will help you understand what you value. Depending on your values, certain careers will make better sense for you. For instance, if altruism is important for you and financial success is not, you may be suited for a career in a nonprofit organization whose goal is to help people rather than to make a profit. Every career has a mixture of these values, so determining your ideal career path includes comparing your values with the values of a certain career.

Summary:



Selecting a career path that suits your skills and interests is important. This choice will define your day-to-day activities, how much money you earn, and your general lifestyle. Your aptitudes, interests, and work values will assist you in making this choice. Certain aptitudes can help you complete certain tasks or jobs easier and more efficiently. You can determine your aptitudes through grades and testing.

Choosing a career that interests you will be much more satisfying. Your work values should play a large role in selecting your career path. Every career has a mixture of

values, so determining your ideal career path includes comparing your values with the values of a certain career.

Checking Your Knowledge:



1. List the common aptitudes.
2. Name one career path that may suit someone with a high numerical aptitude.
3. List two ways to determine your aptitudes.
4. Define altruism.
5. What two work values are most important to you?

Expanding Your Knowledge:



Interview a guidance counselor regarding career paths and how aptitudes relate to different careers. Be sure to have one or two careers in mind. Have specific questions prepared in advance.

Web Links:



Career Clusters

<http://www.careertech.org/career-clusters/glance/careerclusters.html>

Aptitude Testing

<http://www.aptitude-test.com>

My Career Interests

http://www.mappingyourfuture.org/planyourcareer/careership/match_career.cfm