

# Goal-Driven Career Plan

**W**HAT CAREER you will you choose? It is not always obvious because there are many career options beyond what you have seen growing up. The career-planning process provides a guide for you to assess your interests, skills, and values so you can find a job you will enjoy. Creating a plan helps you map the steps you want to take to reach your career goal.



## Objectives:



1. Evaluate career options.
2. Identify an appropriate career match.
3. Describe the education and training required to achieve a career goal.

## Key Terms:



apprentice  
career

continuing education  
job

on-the-job training  
trade schools  
values

vocational-technical  
centers  
Web-based learning

## Career Options

A **career** is an occupation to which an individual has made a long-term commitment. In contrast, a **job** is a set of tasks an individual accomplishes as he or she works. For example, a career in banking may include the following titles: teller, loan officer, bank manager, and/or auditor. Before you determine your path, reflect on who you are and on your personal preferences.

## CONSIDERATIONS

Consider your hobbies and interests. Then consider which skills and aptitudes you demonstrate. Also, identify your **values**—beliefs and principles that are important to you. Then define your personality (e.g., extrovert or introvert). Would you consider additional education and training?

## INVESTIGATING

Investigating different careers begins with finding resources that provide information. Start with the Internet. Conduct research with key words, such as “business” and “management.” This will produce a lot of information about jobs that fit the category and will provide you with a picture of how a discipline connects to one or more industries.

If you want to know more, utilize school and private resources, libraries, and online information. Librarians can suggest local, national, and worldwide resources in the form of newspapers, journals, and databases that have career, industry, and company information. For instance, you can access the Bureau of Labor Statistics online. It provides information about the growth and decline of industries over a 10-year period; training and education by career clusters; job outlook; and a list of specific duties. Other helpful online sources include O’Net and The Occupational Outlook Handbook.



FIGURE 1. Career selection may become overwhelming and confusing.

## An Appropriate Career Match

When you believe you have enough information about a career, it is time to see if you are a good match. Compare career information to your personal preferences.

**TABLE 1. Compare Career Information to Personal Preferences**

Steps	Questions
Begin with the job outlook.	Is job and industry growth predicted?
Reflect on your values, beliefs, and principles.	Do my values match this career?
Review day-to-day job duties.	Do these activities match my interests?
Consider the work hours and environment.	Will this fit my lifestyle? Is there more than one shift?
Look at the list of skills required.	Do I have the aptitude for this career or job?
Check the education and training required.	Do I want to acquire the necessary skills?

Do comparisons for a number of career choices, until you arrive at the ones you wish to pursue. Since career planning is a lifelong endeavor, keep your research. You may refer back to it periodically. This might happen if the industry you enter has a downturn or you lose interest after a number of years in your career. Since people are living longer than ever before, many are changing careers later in life.

## Required Education and Training

The education and training will be determined by the field you wish to enter. There are a variety of options to consider. Specific degrees or certificates are required for many careers.

**TABLE 2. Education and Training Options**

Type of Education and Training	Descriptions
Apprentice	An <b>apprentice</b> is someone who learns how to do a job through hands-on experience under the guidance of a skilled worker and/or a mentor.
College and universities	Public and private schools offer bachelor degrees. These are typically four-year schools.
Community colleges	Offering two-year programs for associate degrees in addition to shorter-term certificate programs.
On-the-job training	<b>On-the-job training</b> is on-site instruction that involves practicing the performance of a particular job.
Trade schools	<b>Trade schools</b> are privately operated institutions that train students for a particular profession.
Vocational-technical centers	<b>Vocational-technical centers</b> are schools (usually public) offering a variety of skills-oriented programs.
Web-based learning	<b>Web-based learning</b> is online and/or computer-based training. It uses interactive technologies (e.g., computers and the Internet).

To obtain additional information about education and training options, you might contact the state unemployment office, armed forces processing center, veterans services centers, adult education/continuing education programs, job training offices, and human resources departments at public and private facilities. The additional help may make it easier to decide on a career. However, not all education and training information is published, so talking with people will give you a broader perspective and firsthand experience.



## FURTHER EXPLORATION...

### ONLINE CONNECTION: Researching Companies

Take note of companies that seem to stand out when you are researching industries. If certain companies stand out, take time to become better acquainted with their operations. Check their websites to gain knowledge about products and services. Get an understanding of the challenges faced by specific companies and their industry as a whole. Check their employment listings for job openings. Even if you are not ready to apply for a position, this can help you identify departments and people for informational interviewing. It is a good way to begin tracking an industry or a company. It may help establish networking contacts.



Spend time researching on the Internet.

### Summary:



Creating your own career plan is an important part of identifying work you would like to do in the future. Your plan is a step-by-step guide of specific activities that can help you focus on accomplishing your goals. It needs to clarify career options so you can narrow the choices you will pursue by matching your personal preferences with career information and by checking the education and training required. It can include a job you might target immediately and a longer-term goal.

### Checking Your Knowledge:



1. Define a career.
2. How is a job different from a career?
3. What is an apprentice?
4. Explain Web-based training.
5. List types of schooling for education and training.

### Expanding Your Knowledge:



Setting goals involves some basic steps. Start with a dream, such as the career you would love. Perhaps you dream of being a carpenter and working at Disney World. Brainstorm the possibilities by assessing your preferences and matching them to your values. Then sort through your options. Ask yourself the following questions:

Is my dream attainable? Can I commit the time to achieve my goal? Do I have the financial resources? What education and/or training are needed? Create a plan that includes manageable goals with target dates to keep you on track. Focus on today so you complete short-term goals as you work toward your desired career.

## Web Links:

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### **Career Choice**

<http://careerplanning.about.com/od/careerchoicechan/tp/Career-Choice.htm>

### **Career Planning**

[http://careerplanning.about.com/cs/choosing\\_a\\_career/a/cp\\_process.htm](http://careerplanning.about.com/cs/choosing_a_career/a/cp_process.htm)

### **Career Path**

[http://www.ehow.com/how\\_7547029\\_choose-career-path-students.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_7547029_choose-career-path-students.html)

### **Career Selection**

[http://wwwFOUNDATIONSforliving.com/career\\_changes/young.htm](http://wwwFOUNDATIONSforliving.com/career_changes/young.htm)