

# Career Planning

**T**HINK BACK to when you were five years old. What did you want to be when you grew up? Consider how your career plans have changed since then. As you get older and gain life experiences, you may change your mind several times about what you want to do. It is important to gather information about various careers and to evaluate what type of job you would enjoy. In this unit, you will learn about the career development process and how you can start planning now for your future career.



## Objective:



Explain the career development process.

## Key Terms:



apprenticeship  
career experience program  
downsizing

Family, Career, and  
Community Leaders of  
America (FCCLA)  
internship  
marketability

SWOT  
temporary employment  
program  
volunteer employment  
program

## Career Development

There are steps you can take now to prepare for your career, even with high school and college in front of you. You can begin to identify your interests and strengths and find the careers that use them. You can even begin to get experience, through a variety of work and volunteer opportunities. Career development should begin now, not when you are ready to begin your career.

## EARLY CAREER PLANNING

Creating a career plan in or before high school gives you the opportunity to develop and evaluate personal career possibilities by considering your interests, skills, and life experiences.

Career interest inventories may help you decide what courses to take in high school. You can identify the courses required for graduation and enroll in elective courses that relate to your interests and strengths. Develop skills for your desired career by participating in youth organizations and extra-curricular activities. Also, you may be able to gain experience through job shadow activities, internships, apprenticeships, summer or after-school jobs, and mentoring or coaching activities.

## FCCLA

Many clubs and activities offer the opportunity to consider your career choices. The **Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA)** organization is a national non-profit career and technical student organization for young men and women (through grade 12) in Family and Consumer Sciences education in public and private schools. Student members participate in local community activities and compete in local, regional, state, and national competitions.

### Mission

High school chapters have a mission “to promote personal growth and leadership development through Family and Consumer Sciences education.” The program states that “Everyone is part of a family, and FCCLA is the only national Career and Technical Student Organization with the family as its focus.”

### Membership

There are currently 219,000 members in nearly 6,500 chapters. According to the FCCLA, members are actively “focusing on the multiple roles of family member, wage earner, and community leader.” Members develop skills for life through character development, creative and critical thinking, interpersonal communication, practical knowledge, and career preparation.

## Other Opportunities

Many youth organizations offer opportunities for students to develop skills and opportunities for community service. Examples are Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, 4-H, Boys and Girls Clubs, park district programs, and community-based after-school programs. In addition, you may find opportunities for community service with police, fire, church, veteran, and fraternal organizations.

Volunteer service activities provide experience and may help you decide what type of career you would enjoy. You could participate in National Youth Service Day; Make a Difference Day; Students Against Drunk Driving (SADD); or Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.).



**FIGURE 1.** Volunteer service activities allow you to gain experience and learn more about potential career choices.



## DIGGING DEEPER...

### UNCOVERING ADDITIONAL FACTS: Best and Worst Parts of Jobs

Some jobs sound fun, but they may have certain aspects that do not appeal to you. For example, you may consider a career as a preschool teacher because you enjoy spending time with children. But the job may involve completing a lot of paperwork and preparing lesson plans as well as cleaning the classroom.

Sometimes you may think a job sounds uninteresting, but it may require a worker with the skills and strengths you possess. Survey five adults and ask them to explain their favorite and least favorite parts of their jobs. Do any of the duties surprise you? Share the findings with your classmates.

## ANALYZING CHOICES

Career assessment tests can help match potential career choices with your personality, interests, skills, and values. Many tests are available online, or your school's guidance counselor may have an assessment to help you.

Your educational experiences may help identify schools, colleges, or technical training opportunities. In addition, they may lead you to research military training and educational opportunities. To research potential careers, read career profiles (e.g., the Dictionary of Occupation Titles). Also, review career videos or DVDs.

An **apprenticeship** is an opportunity that provides a new employee with focused and formal training time with a mentor or a highly skilled worker in a career or profession. These are usually paid positions. Registered apprenticeship programs have been available since 1937. Apprenticeships may be available in FCS areas (e.g., chef, child care development specialist, tailor, fashion designer, and retail manager). In contrast, an **internship** is an opportunity similar to an apprenticeship without the formal training component. It may be a paid or unpaid position. Many companies hire full-time workers from the intern candidates.

- ◆ A **temporary employment program** is an opportunity often called a summer internship and may or may not be related to a person's field of study.
- ◆ A **career experience program** is an opportunity that is part of the educational requirements designed by the education institution, usually a college or university, related to the career major.
- ◆ A **volunteer employment program** is an opportunity that offers work experience that may be used to obtain educational credit.

## DESIGNING A CAREER PLAN

---

When planning a career, first consider your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, which is a **SWOT** analysis.

### Strengths

Strengths are an internal issue used to evaluate a career choice. Internal issues are things within your control. Strengths may come from education and work experiences, or they may be related to personal characteristics.

### Weaknesses

Weaknesses are another internal issue used to evaluate a career choice. Weaknesses may be a result of gaps in the career development plan, but they are not necessarily permanent. You can modify or convert weaknesses into strengths with education and/or work experience.

### Opportunities

Opportunities in your career field are a positive external career issue. External issues are not within your control, but you may be able to adapt to use them to your advantage. To maximize your opportunities, identify career fields with growth and employment opportunities or possible advancement opportunities. Identify career fields that match your skills and education.

### Threats

Threats in the career field are a negative external career issue. You cannot control the threat, but you can minimize the effect it has on you. **Downsizing**, or cutting back the size of the workforce or industry, is a threat in some career fields today. Competition for open positions also may be considered a threat. Consider how many people are applying for each job opening and your odds of getting the job. Another potential threat is when a company or division makes no attempt to keep workers' skills current. This would negatively affect your **market-ability**, or skills to obtain a new position.

### Summary:

---



Creating a career plan in or before high school gives you the opportunity to develop and evaluate personal career possibilities by considering your interests, skills, and life experiences. Many clubs and activities offer the opportunity to consider your career choices. In addition, career assessment tests can help match potential career choices with your personality, interests, skills, and values. You can even try out a career by participating in an apprenticeship, internship, or temporary employment program. Consider internal elements, such as your strengths and weaknesses, as well as external elements, such as opportunities and threats to a career field.

## Checking Your Knowledge:

---



1. Why is it important to begin career planning in or before high school?
2. What clubs and activities can aid in career planning?
3. What is the difference between an apprenticeship and an internship?
4. What internal issues should be used to evaluate career choices?
5. What are examples of threats in the career field?

## Expanding Your Knowledge:

---



Meet with the guidance counselor at your school. Find out what resources are available for career planning. How does the counselor help students analyze their interests, skills, and opportunities? Ask whether your high school helps match up students with apprenticeship and/or internship opportunities. Remember that opportunities are an external factor, but you can use them to your advantage. Find out what percentage of the students take advantage of the assistance offered by the guidance office. Are guidance visits required, or is it up to the student to decide how to participate?

## Web Links:

---



### Explore Career Options

<http://www.acinet.org/explore/view.aspx?pageID=7>

### Job and Career Development

<http://managementhelp.org/careers/>

### SWOT Analysis

[http://www.quintcareers.com/SWOT\\_Analysis.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/SWOT_Analysis.html)