



Your Career. Your Choice.

Explore the Possibilities

[PTA Goes To Work] **Student Guide**

In partnership with the U.S. Department of Labor,
Employment & Training Administration

PTA[®]
everychild.one voice.[®]

Your Career. Your Choice.



Thinking ahead to your future may be very exciting and it may also be very scary. You have a lot of choices. You might change your mind several times about the type of job you want to have. Changing your mind is not a problem—but not planning ahead is. Start exploring possible careers now and find out what kind of education you will need to pursue your career goals.

Whether you plan to go straight into the workforce or to college, it is important to have a plan. Start by taking these steps:

- Think about what you want to do and find out what kind of training, education, and skills you will need to achieve your career goal.
- Assess your skills and interests. Think hard about what you enjoy, the skills and abilities you possess or want to develop, your personality, and the values you hold.
- Research a variety of occupations. Find out about the nature of the jobs that interest you, such as educational requirements, salary, working conditions, future outlook, and anything else that can help narrow your focus.
- Compare your skills and interests with the careers in which you're interested. The career that matches your skills, interests, and personality best may be the career for you.
- Prepare your resume and practice interviewing techniques.
- Participate in summer work experiences, internships or training programs. Try to match these experiences with your skills, interests, and career goals.
- Research and visit schools that offer training and/or academic programs that best meet your career goal and financial needs.
- Find out about financial aid available to help you meet your career goal. If you haven't already done so, begin saving for your transition from high school.
- Go to your career guidance center at your middle school or high school. Visit your local library for additional information and help with career planning.
- Don't go it alone! Work with your parents, older siblings and other adults you trust.



The career that matches your skills, interests, and personality best may be the career for you.

If you have a disability that requires special accommodations, you should also follow these steps:

- Understand the relationships between benefits planning and career choices.
- Learn to communicate your disability-related work support and accommodation needs.
- Learn to find, formally request, and secure appropriate support and reasonable accommodations in educational, training, and employment settings.

If you haven't decided exactly what you want to do with the rest of your life, don't worry! The U.S. Department of Labor, Employment & Training Administration and the PTA have gathered some of the latest and best information to help you explore all of your possibilities. It is never too late or too early to begin planning for your career!

To fully participate and be successful in the 21st century workforce, you can expect to engage in lifelong learning. This means that even if you want to start working right away, go to a university, attend your local community college, join the military, or start an apprenticeship, it is necessary for you to continue your education and training throughout your lifetime.

<p style="text-align: center;">In the Past ...</p> <p style="text-align: center;">People had 1-2 jobs and retired.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Good jobs were available with a high school degree or less.</p>	
	<p style="text-align: center;">Today ...</p> <p>People will have 15-17 jobs in a lifetime.</p> <p>90 percent of the fastest growing careers will need workers with education and training after high school.</p>

You will probably have questions such as:

- *Where do I start?*
- *What will be some of the hottest jobs in the next 10 years?*
- *What resources and tools are out there to help me navigate my career pathway?*
- *What skills will I need for future careers?*
- *How can I earn an income while I learn a skill in an exciting high growth industry?*
- *What type of education do I need for the job that I want?*

You do not have to tackle these questions alone! Visit your career guidance center or local library for additional information and help with career planning, and work with your parents or other adults you trust to find out more.

You can also connect with your local One-Stop Career Center. The U.S. Department of Labor, Employment & Training Administration supports a network of One-Stop Career Centers across the country that offer career information, employment assistance, options for internships, and links to community service opportunities. You can locate the nearest One-Stop Career Center by calling DOL's toll-free helpline at (877) US2-JOBS (872-5627) or TTY (877) 889-5627. Information is available in over 140 languages.

Where do I get started?

By now, you probably have begun thinking about what you would like to do after high school graduation, and about how to make money in the “real world.”

Understanding your interests is the first step in getting started with your career exploration. When you conduct a self-assessment, you start to explore what is important to you, what you enjoy, what you really want to do, and your life’s ambitions and/or goals. Answering these questions will help you choose a career that is right for you.

Numerous assessment tools can help determine your interests, values, and aptitudes, and assist you in making informed decisions about career options. One online tool is O*NET™ OnLine at www.online.onetcenter.org,

which provides information on career planning and assessment tools. Once you have completed your assessment, you can start mapping your achievements, interests, and goals with the appropriate occupation suited for you.



What’s Hot in the 21st Century?

Experts project that a substantial number of new jobs in high growth industries will be added to the 21st century economy. High growth industries are continually transformed by technology and innovation, and require new skill sets for workers.

Our economy really needs nanotechnologists, geospatial experts, and biotechnologists. These are the jobs that our country will need to fill in order to continue being leaders and innovators in the world.

The U.S. Department of Labor, Employment & Training Administration has worked with a number of high growth industries to better understand the career opportunities they offer. More information about high growth, high-demand industries is listed below and included in many of the materials we’re providing to you.

HIGH GROWTH INDUSTRIES

Advanced Manufacturing invents and creates products people need and want. Whether it is clothing, computers, food, medicine, or cosmetics, virtually everything we use on a daily basis is manufactured.

Aerospace offers hundreds of high technology companies along with NASA (the National Aeronautics and Space Administration) and other Federal agencies that work collaboratively in major sectors of aerospace including commercial air, space exploration, national defense, and research and development.

Automotive includes jobs ranging from automobile service technicians to commercial sales representatives.

Construction is the second-largest industry in the nation, and is becoming increasingly high-tech. This industry, consisting of mostly small, privately-owned firms, accounts for nearly 10 percent of all businesses. There is a need for bright, talented people to fill the jobs at architecture and engineering firms and construction companies.

Energy is an industry with job growth that is booming. Along with an increased demand for traditional energy sources, there is increased emphasis on renewable resources like wind and solar energy. The range of jobs is almost unlimited. The most common entry-level field jobs usually require little or no previous training or experience. Other entry-level positions, such as engineering technician, usually require at least a two-year Associate's degree in engineering technology. Within just a few years, engineers with four-year degrees may earn six-figure salaries.

Financial Services is a large and diverse industry. Jobs are available in a wide range of corporations and government agencies, as well as in banks and other financial institutions. This career field allows employees to apply their math skills with strategic financial planning, quantitative analysis, investment management, and sales.

Health Care careers are always evolving. New research findings, technologies, and discoveries in the medical profession all add fresh and ever-changing dimensions to this industry. People looking for a challenge and variety, and who want to make a difference by helping people, can accomplish all that and more in the health care sector.

Homeland Security encompasses a broad range of activities and occupations including emergency preparedness and response, border and transportation security, infrastructure protection, information analysis, and homeland defense. Many homeland security jobs and career opportunities are with federal, state, and local government agencies, but there are also many other opportunities with private companies and nonprofit organizations.

Hospitality consists of sectors such as hotel/lodging and restaurant/food service. This industry is growing rapidly, which means there are many great career opportunities coming in the years ahead. Jobs will be plentiful for first-time job seekers, and those seeking part-time or alternative work schedules.

Information Technology (IT) is critical to all facets of work in all industries and sectors, and is an industry in its own right. America continues to suffer from a shortage of qualified IT workers with flexible and portable skills who can readily adapt and respond to ever-changing IT demands and processes.



Retail is a dynamic field with diverse career ladders, a wide range of employee benefits, and on-the-job training. This sector is driven increasingly by high-end technology and requires advanced skills for certain positions.

Transportation including air, road, rail, and water systems is an economic necessity to transport people, goods and services globally each day. Almost every industry in today's economy requires drivers, operators, dispatchers, attendants, mechanics, and engineers in the transportation sector.

Experts project that a substantial number of new jobs in high growth industries will be added to the 21st century economy.

OTHER EMERGING HIGH GROWTH INDUSTRIES

Biotechnology consists of life sciences, technology, and manufacturing and is an industry in which new discoveries are occurring every day. Because the industry is experiencing such rapid growth, biotechnology firms often demand more skilled workers than are available, and are projected to need more workers than are currently enrolled in existing training programs.

Geospatial Technology combines interests in the earth, space, and technology into one emerging field, where new “offshoot” opportunities are emerging daily. Geospatial technology professionals, technologists, and technicians work in a wide range of related scientific and technical fields, such as agriculture, archeology, biology, cartography, ecology, envi-

ronmental sciences, forestry and range, geodesy, geography, geology, hydrology and water resources, land appraisal and real estate, medicine, transportation, urban planning and development, and more.

For information on finding a job, job training, preparing for employment, researching careers, preparing your resume, getting interview tips, building skills, and more, check out:

America’s Career InfoNet (www.careerinfonet.org) is an electronic resource for individuals of all ages in all stages of career development. Whether attending high school, college, or recently graduated, Career InfoNet contains information that can help users advance their careers. Research occupations, compare wages, build your resume, and search from thousands of other career resources, including scholarship and financial aid information.

The U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics Kids’ Page (www.bls.gov/k12) is a website that provides introductory career information for students.

CareerOneStop Coach (www.onestopcoach.org) identifies common problems and issues facing job seekers, workers, and employers and provides interactive step-by-step instructions to help users find answers and related information.

America’s Service Locator (www.servicelocator.org) connects people to local offices providing employment and training services. It provides maps and driving directions to each of the 3,500 One-Stop Career Centers.

Nanotechnology is the group of emerging technologies in which matter is measured on the nanometer scale (down to individual atoms in size), and is manipulated to produce unique materials and products. Today, much of the work in nanotechnology involves basic research and development (R&D) sponsored and supported by corporate, university, and federal collaborations. Within the next 10 years, the National Science Foundation (NSF) estimates that the need for nanotechnology workers will rise from 20 thousand to 2 million globally. Work in the field of nanotechnology requires specialized education and training, but the job and career rewards are substantial.

For more information about these industries, visit the Career Voyages website at www.careervoyages.gov. This website is designed to meet the unique needs of stu-

dents, parents, and teachers. Students may be surprised to find many of their interests will lead them to a career in one of these high growth industries. Another good source of information is the ***In Demand Magazine*, which is on the website at www.careervoyages.gov/indemandmagazine-main.cfm.** Each issue provides interesting and relevant information about career opportunities, education, and the skills needed for various careers. It also offers resources to explore careers and tips about how to build a successful future.

Preparing for Careers in the 21st Century

Before you start on your career pathway, you should explore what skills will be needed. This will help you make informed decisions about classes to take, schools to attend, necessary degrees or credentials, and on-the-job expectations.

Technical or specific workplace skills and competencies required to compete in the 21st century workplace have changed. Technology skills and computer proficiency are key for workers in all industries. Even if the career you choose does not focus solely on IT, the job will most likely require the use of computers and technology to accomplish tasks and process information. Ninety-two percent of all IT workers are in non-IT companies, 80 percent of these are small companies. In addition, the mathematics and reading abilities of today's workforce need to be at a much higher level than those of a high school graduate. Employers are looking for workers with strong written and oral communication skills, and the ability to solve multiple-level problems.



The U.S. Department of Labor, Employment & Training Administration has worked with partners from business and industry, as well as job analysts and other experts, to develop a competency model that represents the skills, knowledge, and abilities essential for successful performance in a high growth industry or occupation. This includes your personal skills—such as being able to cooperate with others, resolve conflicts, and adapt to change—and workplace, academic, industry, and occupational competencies.

To learn more about what skills you will need for the occupation you want, or to learn about other occupations, visit www.careeronestop.org/CompetencyModel/default.aspx.

	Projected change in employment, 2004–2014	Average annual earnings, 2006
Postsecondary teachers	524,000	\$64,610
General and operations managers	308,000	\$99,280
Elementary school teachers, except special education	265,000	\$48,700
Accountants and auditors	264,000	\$60,670
Computer software engineers, applications	222,000	\$82,000
Computer systems analysts	153,000	\$72,230
Secondary school teachers, except special and vocational education	148,000	\$51,150
Computer software engineers, systems software	146,000	\$87,250
Physicians and surgeons	136,000	\$142,220
Network systems and data communications analysts	126,000	\$67,460

Above Average Wages & High Projected Growth Occupations

(Jobs that typically require a bachelor's degree)

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
www.bls.gov

How Do I Get There From Here? What Are The Pathways?

A good education is key to any career and lays the foundation for increasing earning potential. In order to compete in the 21st century economy, post-secondary education is a critical element for successfully entering, navigating, and advancing in today's job market. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 90 percent of the fastest growing jobs require post-secondary education and training; in fact, by 2012, over 40 percent of factory jobs will require post-secondary education.

If you want other youth-related workforce information, check out:

Youth Rules! (www.youthrules.dol.gov), is a gateway that offers quick access to information about Federal and state labor rules.

Teen Workers (www.osha.gov/SLTC/teenworkers) provides safety and health information about the teen worker.

Helping America's Youth (www.helpingamericayouth.gov), a web-based guide with up-to-date research and resources on youth development and effective programs.

Education Counts

Whether college is an immediate goal or not, many employers today expect their workers to have the same skills as those entering college. Make your high school educational experience work for you:

- Talk to a teacher or school guidance counselor about your plans and interests as soon as possible. They are your best resource as you plan for your future, and they can supply information about admission tests, college preparation, and career options.
 - Make sure you understand ALL the requirements for graduation, and the requirements to begin post-secondary education or other career development programs.
 - Take advantage of after-school or weekend learning activities. These can be community service or volunteer experiences; joining an academic or extra-curricular club; or becoming a member of organizations such as Junior Achievement, 4-H, Boys and Girls Clubs, Future Business Leaders, or SkillsUSA.
- Colleges and most employers not only look at grades, but also at which courses were taken and their degree of difficulty. Challenge yourself by taking an Advance Placement (AP®) course for college credit or take additional advanced level courses such as a foreign language, science, and math. This will expose you to the higher level thinking expected in college and in many of the well-paying jobs.
 - Participate in work experiences, internships, pre-apprenticeships, or training programs that will match skills, interests, and career goals with an on-the-job experience.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 90 percent of the fastest growing jobs require post-secondary education and training. Vocational training may be available through career academies and/or dual or concurrent enrollment arrangements with post-secondary educational institutions. This is a great way to prepare for work and college, and often provides valuable links to employers.

Making Your Classes Count

In order to get the most out of your classes, consider the following tips:

- **Sit close to the front** of the classroom when possible.
- **Join in** class discussions.
- **Ask questions!** If you don't understand something, chances are others in the class don't understand either.
- **Keep up** with class assignments. Finish them before they're due.
- **Ask for help** in any class in which you find yourself falling behind. Remember, your teachers want to help you succeed!
- Look for ways to **sharpen your basic skills** in each class. You can practice your writing skills in history, your algebra skills in science, and your math and science skills in vocational education classes.
- **Learn keyboarding** skills so you can type your own schoolwork and use a computer.
- Learn to **take good class notes**. You'll be taking lots of notes for the rest of your life.
- Learn to **proofread, correct, and rewrite** your written work.
- **Develop good test-taking habits and skills**. Your counselor and teachers can show you how to get started.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 90 percent of the fastest growing jobs require post-secondary education and training; in fact, by 2012, over 40 percent of factory jobs will require post-secondary education.

Making What You Do Outside of School Count, Too!

- Develop good work habits now that will help you succeed in high school, in education after high school, and in the world of work.
- Find a quiet place to study where you won't be interrupted.
- Plan a daily homework schedule and stick to it. Do more than is required.
- Ask your family or friends to read your written work. Also ask them for help if you're having trouble at school.
- Use your local library. If you don't have a library card, get one. They're free.
- Read newspapers and magazines. Talk with your family and friends about what you read.
- Look up words you don't know in the dictionary. Then use your new words in writing and while speaking.
- Talk with your family about career plans and what you want to do in the future.

Vocational Training Schools and Community Colleges

Technical training schools offer a wide variety of job training options in areas such as cosmetology, mechanical and automotive repair, paralegal services, travel services, secretarial, and medical assistance. Depending on location, they may be connected to a high school or a stand alone school that serves both youth and adult students. The typical academic preparation vocational courses are short, lasting from five to 12 months, although some training programs can take up to two or three years to complete.

Community colleges generally offer two-year studies with an Associate's degree conferred upon completion. This coursework usually prepares people for a technical occupation and includes occupational, general education, and elective courses (e.g., accounting, dental hygienist, computer programmer/analyst.) However, many community colleges have transfer agreements with four-year post-secondary institutions for students who would like to continue their education. For more information, visit www.careervoyages.gov/commcolleges-main.cfm.

Colleges and Universities

Colleges and universities offer undergraduate and graduate programs leading to Bachelor's, Master's, or Doctoral degrees. Their influence often extends far beyond the campus training curriculum, and develops some of the nation's most highly-skilled workers. These institutions serve as a catalyst for many of the research and technology advancements that fuel regional and national economic growth. To learn more about four-year degrees, visit www.careervoyages.gov/4yearcolleges-main.cfm.

Many young people plan to attend these institutions. The skills you will acquire there will help contribute to your success in any occupation. The PTA and the Department of Labor, Employment & Training Administration also recognize that not everyone follows the same road map. A four-year college or university is not always the best or right choice for every student. There are wide arrays of experiences to prepare individuals for high-paying, rewarding careers including:

Military Service

Today's military is more advanced technologically and offers many more high-tech occupations than in the past. There are over 4,100 different job paths from pharmacy to journalism to electronics. That means military service people often enter the private sector as experienced and highly sought-after candidates. See www.todaymilitary.com for more information and online tools to assist young people in exploring the options and benefits of military service.

Education & Training Pays, 2006

Earnings for workers 25 and older by educational attainment; earnings for full-time wages and salary workers

Education Level	Median Weekly Earnings (\$USD)
Doctoral Degree	\$1,441
Professional Degree	\$1,474
Master's Degree	\$1,140
Bachelor's Degree	\$962
Associate Degree	\$721
Some College	\$674
High School Grad	\$595
Some High School	\$419

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

www.bls.gov

Apprenticeship

Apprenticeship is known as the *other* four-year degree. Apprenticeship is a highly flexible training model that combines on-the-job learning with related classroom instruction, whereby paid employees receive technical and practical training in highly-skilled occupations. Apprentices enter into agreements with a program sponsor, which may be an employee association, employer, or employer group. The program sponsor assumes the responsibility of training, which includes working and learning under a mentor. Apprentices often earn college credit through their apprenticeship program. For more information on apprenticeship programs, talk to your guidance counselor and go to www.doleta.gov/OA/.

Industry-Recognized Credentials

Industry-recognized credentials are often used to meet the specific needs of business and industry and help to assist employees in meeting certification requirements for their job. Certificate programs show that a particular person has completed coursework in a focused area of study (e.g., advanced organizational leadership, customer service, or landscape specialist.) Some examples include credentials offered by the National Retail Federation for customer service and the Manufacturing Skills Standard Council's production training credential. For more information, visit the website at: www.careeronestop.org/Credentialing/CredentialingHome.asp.

Invest in Your Future. Start Today!

We hope that this Guide has sparked some interest in starting or continuing your career exploration. But we are not done yet! The PTA and the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment & Training Administration plan to provide additional information on scholarships, mapping out your school year, and important career and education terminology online at www.pta.org.

If you have any additional questions, please don't forget to use all the resources available, including guidance counselors, the library, your parents, www.career-voyages.gov, and your local One-Stop Career Center. They are all there to help you find a winning career path!

Special thanks to the following agencies for their support in the development of this resource:

- U.S. Department of Labor, Employment & Training Administration
- U.S. Department of Education
- ACT
- America's Career Resource Network
- Mapping Your Future
- The States' Career Clusters Initiative
- The U.S. Chamber of Commerce Center for Workforce Preparation
- The College Board





PTA[®]

everychild.one voice.[®]

(800) 307-4PTA (4782)
info@pta.org * www.pta.org