



MIDDLE SCHOOL | UNIT 2

Getting Paid

Title

Career Planning 101

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- **categorize** jobs based on various considerations and prioritize for importance.
- **understand** the difference between a career and a job.
- **research** to compile information on various job opportunities.
- **analyze** the differences between two jobs.

Content Area

English Language Arts

Grades

6–8

Overview

What education will your students need to land their dream jobs? Students will complete a short research activity in which they consider the many facets of various jobs. This activity begins with cursory information gathering about different careers in various industries. Students then participate in more in-depth research to reveal necessary education, potential salary, etc. within chosen careers before comparing results with peers to determine which jobs are likely to lead to the highest incomes over time.

Themes

Personal Finance: Careers and Income

English Language Arts: Research; Speaking and Listening

Common Core English Language Arts Standards

W.6.7, W.7.7, W.8.7: Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions for further research and investigation.

SL.6.4, SL.7.4, SL.8.4: Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with pertinent descriptions, facts, details, and examples; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

Pathway to Financial Success

In Schools

Connect

How does this connect to the student?

Students will soon need to begin making education and training decisions that affect their future careers. While it may seem early to some students to think about careers in middle school, their course selections in high school can have an impact on their future education options. Researching career opportunities, characteristics, and requirements now will assist them in making positive decisions later.

How does this connect to careers?

Career Counselor: Students aren't the only ones who struggle to decide what they "want to be when they grow up." Many adults need help finding a job they enjoy and that meets their needs. Career counselors or job coaches help people who are looking to change careers, re-enter the workforce, recover from the loss of a job, or who want to move up in their career.

How does this connect to technology?

Technology has changed many aspects of searching for a job. For example, students' grandparents may have obtained information about job opportunities from a newspaper's classified section. Today's job seekers have easy access to job listings on multiple search engines along with government data on things like earnings and outlooks. Technology has also impacted the way people apply and interview for jobs, too.

Key Terms

Personal Finance: job, career, salary

English Language Arts: research

Prepare

Background: At this age, students will be in different places with regards to thinking about their future. Some may have a concrete plan for their futures, while others have no desire to even consider it. No matter what a student's outlook, they should be encouraged to think about the types of jobs that will interest them and understand that some of the decisions they make now and in high school could impact their future—namely what amount of education they plan to pursue. For example, many colleges expect students to have taken a certain number or level of math courses in order to be considered for admission. This is heavily influenced by course selection decisions that often begin in middle school. While students may have an opportunity to change "tracks" later on, they should understand that their early decisions can have long-lasting impacts.

Students may have a vague understanding that people with more education and training tend to earn higher incomes. They might be surprised to know, however, that over the course of a lifetime, a person with a college degree can expect to earn a million dollars more than someone with a high school diploma. People with less education and fewer job skills tend to earn lower incomes than people with more education and greater job skills. Investment in education and training generally has a positive rate of return in terms of the income people earn over a lifetime. That said, there are exceptions to every rule. There are many [good-paying jobs](#) in the trades and other fields that do not require a college degree. Students should be encouraged to understand what education or training is required for the jobs they desire and to think ahead about how much they will earn in comparison to how much they will spend preparing themselves.

Pathway to Financial Success

In Schools

Income, however, is only one piece of the puzzle for students considering careers. There are many other factors that could and should influence their decision. The factors that matter the most will vary from one student to another and may be influenced by their personal, family, and cultural values. It is helpful to recognize and foster respect for how these factors vary from one student to another.

Materials

- **Board or Chart Paper**
- **What’s Important to Me? Student Capture Sheet**—one copy per student
- [What Do You Want To Be When You Grow Up? Unit 2 Student Video](#)
- **I Want to Be... Student Handout**—one copy per student or displayed electronically
- **Markers or Highlighters**
- **Job Profile Student Capture Sheet**—one copy per student
- **Computer and Internet Access**

Engage

- Ask students to share what they want to be when they grow up. If students have difficulty answering the question, you can provide other qualifiers like, “What job seems really cool/fun?” or “What job will make you a lot of money?” Create a T-chart on the board or chart paper and label one side “Jobs.” Record student responses on this side of the chart.
- Explain to students that there are many factors people consider when choosing what career to pursue, such as how much money they’ll make (or **salary**) and if they will enjoy their work. Label the other side of the T-chart “Considerations” and list salary and enjoyment in that column. Invite students to provide other considerations and list them on the chart.
 - Sample answers: how long they’ll have to go to school, work environment (i.e., office, outdoors), how easy/hard it is to find a job, etc.
- Distribute a copy of **What’s Important to Me? Student Capture Sheet** to each student. Challenge students to determine which of the considerations listed are most important to them and note their top two at the top of the columns. Then, direct students to record jobs that align with each consideration in the chart. They can look at the class’s list for inspiration and/or search for job ideas online.
- Instruct students to compare their two lists and record any jobs that appear in both.

Teach

- Play the video, [What Do You Want To Be When You Grow Up?](#) Explain to students that a **career** is based on working at **jobs** within a certain occupation, profession, or industry over multiple years. People in the United States work in many different jobs; in fact, there are over 10,000 jobs in the United States right now.
- Distribute or display electronically **I Want to Be... Student Handout**. Use it to help students visualize the difference between a career and a job. With a partner, invite students to analyze the lists they made earlier. Using a highlighter, challenge students to mark which items on their lists are careers.
- Reinforce that the jobs students will have in the future are likely to be based on skills and interests they have now, as well as some of the other considerations they discussed earlier. Remind them of what they learned in the video about the different levels of education and training required for different jobs, as well as the different salary expectations they can have based on them.

Pathway to Financial Success

In Schools

- The host in the video told students to “do their homework.” Ask students to share what they think that means. What types of information will they need to make decisions about future jobs? How could they gather the information they need?
- Distribute a copy of **Job Profile Student Capture Sheet** to each student. Instruct them to choose two jobs from their lists that they are interested in and write them on the chart. Direct students to compile information for each category in the chart using **research**, or information gathered through searches of online and print resources.
 - While many students will be able to locate relevant information using search engines, BLS's Occupational Handbook is a useful tool: <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/home.htm>
- At the conclusion of their research, invite students to reflect on whether “doing their homework” on future job options has made them more or less interested in pursuing those jobs. They can record their reflections on the handout.

Conclude

- Call on student pairs to present to the class which job they believe is likely to make more over time and why. Challenge students to use their research and calculations to justify their claims.
- Direct students to submit an exit ticket answering the following question: Have you changed your answer about what you want to be when you grow up? Explain.

Extend

- **Guest Speakers:** Invite guest speakers from careers of interest into the classroom to provide personal testimony and supplement student research. Have students prepare questions beforehand, and challenge them to amend their work with new information obtained from speakers.
- **Research:** Challenge students to research how jobs have changed over time. In what ways have innovations in technology or other factors influenced the increase and decrease in demand for particular jobs? How might the outlook for the jobs they considered be impacted over time?
- **Family:** Direct students to interview family members and record information about their professions similar to that in their research. Have students discuss with family members whether or not they believe their career choices to have been “worth it” and why. What influenced their career choices?
- **College and Career Readiness:** Invite a guidance counselor from a local high school to come and speak with students about various colleges/technical programs and their corresponding programs of interest. They can discuss potential high school course selection and programming that could be beneficial to students’ interests/career aspirations.

What's Important to Me?

Directions: Label the columns with the two most important considerations you have when deciding on a job. Then, record jobs that align with those considerations under each.

What jobs appear on both lists?

An Engineer	A Doctor
<p>Mechanical Engineer Automotive Engineer Electrical Engineer Computer Scientist Process Improvement Specialist Environmental Engineer Agricultural Engineer Quality Specialist Software Engineer</p>	<p>Pediatrician Nurse Practitioner Pharmacist Emergency Room Physician Radiologist Surgeon Dentist Podiatrist Physician's Assistant</p>
A Teacher	An Artist
<p>Daycare Provider Preschool Teacher Elementary School Teacher English Teacher Math Teacher Music Teacher Science Teacher College Professor Principal</p>	<p>Art Teacher Painter Illustrator Graphic Designer Set Designer Fashion Designer Museum Curator Interior Designer Animator</p>

Job Profile

Directions: “Do your homework” by researching two jobs and completing the table below.

	JOB #1:	JOB #2:
Education/Training Required		
How Long Will I Be in School?		
Average Salary		
High or Low Demand?		
Best Colleges or Training Institutions		
Potential Employers		
Useful High School Courses or Programs		

I am (more/less) interested in Job #1 because:

I am (more/less) interested in Job #2 because: