

JOBS OF THE FUTURE

RESEARCH ACTIVITY ABOUT CAREERS



**SOFT SKILLS
CLASSROOM
POSTER**

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THE INSIDE SCOOP ON CAREER FIELDS

Introduce students to the concept of career fields, job positions, and other real-world aspects of having a job.

Objective

Students will research a specific job industry that reflects their skills and interests and practice seeing themselves as career seekers.

CCSS Standards, Grades 6–8

- WHST.9—draw evidence from informational texts to support research
- SL.1.A—come to discussions prepared, having researched material under study

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Plot Your Career Path activity sheet
- *Jobs of the Future* student magazine
- Materials to create a board game: dice, markers, cardboard, construction paper
- Spotlight Your Strengths activity sheet

Instructions

1 Prompt students to share ideas about what a job involves, beyond simply working to get paid. Explain the difference between a **job** (short-term) and a **career** (long-term) and what it means to have a **profession** (required training, qualifications, etc.)

2 Define “entry-level” as the starting point on a career path. Explain that while entry-level positions often require less technical expertise, certain soft skills can help an applicant stand out from other candidates and get hired. Point to the poster. Ask: *Which skills do you think would provide an edge in an entry-level position?*

3 Explain that youth apprenticeships are a way that students can gain entry-level experience while in high school, and where they can develop skills on the job (and earn money). (See the student magazine and teaching guide for more on skill development and youth apprenticeships.)

4 Explain that employers assess entry-level workers by how well they learn to understand the work required and how well they complete their assignments. As an entry-level employee gains skills and expertise, they can take on more responsibilities, get promoted (moved up to a higher role), and earn a higher salary. Point out that a worker’s role grows over the course of their career.

5 Write a list on the board of the different seniority levels of career pathways, and have students work in groups to predict the order (e.g., youth apprenticeship > entry-level > junior level > manager > department head > vice president > president or CEO).

6 Hand out the Plot Your Career Path activity sheet and set students up to begin their research. Be sure to give an overview of what the end goal will be (the creation of a board game).

7 Distribute materials for students to make their board games. Provide additional structure as needed (recommended for 6th grade). One option is to guide students to make a deck of cards that feature the career events—including skill experiences and setbacks. If you do not have access to dice, cards can also be used to advance game play by indicating how many spaces forward/backward a player should move their game piece. Have students take turns playing each other’s games and providing feedback on how more career details could be included.

Extensions

- Have students write an informational report that gives an overview or a more in-depth exploration of different jobs within an industry, then present their findings via a presentation or gallery walk.
- Guide students to use the Spotlight Your Strengths activity sheet to build a resume. Provide time for students to give feedback on each other’s resumes. Challenge them to consider how/why the decisions they make today (including social media posts) can have a long-term impact on how future employers see them.



MORE RESOURCES ONLINE

Visit scholastic.com/apprenticeship for more middle school lessons and activities on careers, jobs, and youth apprenticeships.

- Learn more about youth apprenticeships at apprenticeship.gov/educators/high-school-and-middle-school.
- Explore real job listings of apprenticeships at apprenticeship.gov. (To view a wide variety, leave out your location during your search.)

Name _____

PLOT YOUR CAREER PATH



PART 1 Use the questions below to complete detailed research on a line of work you are interested in. Focus on how a career in your chosen industry can evolve over time. (Use additional paper as necessary.)

1 Which job sector/industry would you like to focus on? (For example, information technology, health sciences, business, etc.) _____

2 What types of jobs exist in this industry? (For example, nurse, coder, accountant, etc.) _____

3 What are the most common career paths for working in this industry? _____

4 What additional skills, experience, or credentials do you need to advance in this field? _____

5 Which hard skills are especially important to have in this line of work? _____

6 Which soft skills are especially important to have in this line of work? _____

PART 2

Use the information you gathered to develop a board game that traces a career journey from entry-level to the head of an industry. Your game should spotlight key steps, include setbacks as well as achievements, and show how specific soft skills connect to the events. Remember, there can be many different paths to a successful career!

LESSON | A WHOLE WORLD OF CAREERS

Help students navigate possible occupations and apprenticeships with this fun research activity.

Objective

Students will conduct research and analyze information to look for patterns, then collaboratively discuss their findings.

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Find Your “Right Now” Job activity sheet



Instructions

1 Encourage students to identify potential careers. As a warm-up, ask them to share with a partner one or more careers that have sparked their interest and why.

2 Distribute the Find Your “Right Now” Job activity sheet. Have students use the prompts to research criteria for teen jobs and apprenticeships related to their career interests.

3 Direct students to display completed research sheets around the classroom and give the class time to read several different job profiles. Organize a scavenger hunt by calling out certain criteria (e.g., strong written and verbal communication skills) and challenging students to find jobs and/or apprenticeships that match (e.g., speechwriter, marketing assistant).

4 Hold a class discussion guiding students to reflect on what they learned about the various careers, jobs, and apprenticeships they researched. Encourage them to elaborate on new discoveries they’ve made and actionable next steps to explore career pathways.

Suggested discussion prompts

- Do you notice a pattern in the types of jobs that appeal to you? Describe it!
- Which job criterion applied to many different positions? Why do you think that is?
- Share one thing you learned from this activity that surprised you and why.

Increase the Challenge

Direct students to turn research findings into infographics. (Use them in the scavenger hunt!)

ONLINE RESOURCES TO GUIDE APPRENTICESHIP RESEARCH

Start here—and see if your school has other career exploration resources!

- Explore real job listings of apprenticeships (to see a wide variety, leave out your location during your search): [apprenticeship.gov](https://www.apprenticeship.gov)
- Check out careers that match your interests using cool customized search tools: mynextmove.org
- Learn more about apprenticeships for high school students: [apprenticeship.gov/educators/high-school](https://www.apprenticeship.gov/educators/high-school)
- Get information about which industries have the most new jobs: [bls.gov/ooh/](https://www.bls.gov/ooh/)

Name _____

FIND YOUR "RIGHT NOW" JOB

Instructions Consider your skills and interests and select a career to focus on. Then, using the prompts and online resources your teacher provided, research criteria for jobs or apprenticeships related to that career.

JOB/APPRENTICESHIP TITLE #1

- Summarize the job/apprenticeship description in the space below:

- What are the eligibility requirements/ qualifications (e.g., education, skills, prior job training)?

- What skills is this employer looking for?

- What are some of the things that appeal to you about this position?

JOB/APPRENTICESHIP TITLE #2

- Summarize the job/apprenticeship description in the space below:

- What are the eligibility requirements/ qualifications (e.g., education, skills, prior job training)?

- What skills is this employer looking for?

- What are some of the things that appeal to you about this position?

Name _____

SPOTLIGHT YOUR STRENGTHS

Write a mock resume that highlights your skills, experience, and interests—and help employers see why you'd be a great hire!

Instructions: Fill in the resume template below and try to make connections between your skills and experience and the position you are seeking.

Name

Phone Number

Email Address

EDUCATION

Write your school's name.

• _____

OBJECTIVE

(Example) I am a self-motivated and quick learner seeking an entry-level position at ... (Describe the youth apprenticeship or a specific type of work and/or position you'd like to apply for.)

• _____

SKILLS

List hard skills (e.g., coding, fluency in a foreign language, etc.) and soft skills (e.g., proactive, detail-oriented, good problem-solver, etc.)

• _____

• _____

• _____

EXPERIENCE

List jobs you've done at home or in your community, as well as volunteer gigs.

• _____

• _____

• _____

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Won an essay contest? Served as captain of the soccer team? Cared for a sibling after school? List your achievements here.

• _____

• _____

• _____

ACTIVITIES AND INTERESTS

Highlight classes, clubs, sports, passions, etc., that reflect the position you want.

• _____

• _____

• _____