

Exploring life after high school in the skilled trades

Students research a career in the skilled trades on the U.S. Department of Labor-sponsored careeronestop.org website to gain insights on what that career involves and how they might prepare for it.

Learning goals

Big idea

Planning now for life after high school can help set you up for success after you graduate.

Essential questions

- What are my career options in the skilled trades?
- What are some higher education options I might consider to help me prepare for that career?

Objectives


- Choose a career in the skilled trades to research
- Answer questions about what the career involves and options for preparing for it

What students will do

- Choose a career in the skilled trades to explore on the U.S. Department of Labor-sponsored careeronestop.org website.
- Answer questions to better understand that career pathway.
- Explore at least one program that may help them prepare for that career.

KEY INFORMATION

Building block:

 Financial knowledge and decision-making skills

Grade level: High school (9-12)

Age range: 13-19

Topic: Earn (Making money)

School subject: CTE (Career and technical education)

Teaching strategy: Blended learning, Cooperative learning

Bloom's Taxonomy level: Understand, Apply

Activity duration: 45-60 minutes

STANDARDS

Council for Economic Education
Standard I. Earning income

Jump\$tart Coalition
Employment and income - Standards 1, 2, and 3
Financial decision-making - Standard 1

Preparing for this activity

- Print copies of all student materials, or prepare for students to access them electronically.
- Become familiar with the [careeronestop.org](https://www.careeronestop.org) website's "Occupation Profile" page at <https://www.careeronestop.org/GetMyFuture/Toolkit/Occupation-Profile.aspx?newsearch=true>.
- Secure access to the Internet and computers or tablets so students can conduct research.

What you'll need

THIS TEACHER GUIDE

- Exploring life after high school in the skilled trades (guide)
[cfpb_building_block_activities_exploring-life-after-high-school-trades_guide.pdf](#)

STUDENT MATERIALS

- Exploring life after high school in the skilled trades (worksheet)
[cfpb_building_block_activities_exploring-life-after-high-school-trades_worksheet.pdf](#)
- Computers or tablets with Internet access

Exploring key financial concepts

As students start thinking about life after high school, they can explore careers they'd like to pursue and how they might prepare for those careers to help set them up for success after graduation. Understanding the knowledge and skills different careers require, the opportunities those careers might provide, and the education or training options available can help students decide what's best for them and plan for the future.

Teaching this activity

Whole-class introduction

- Distribute the “Exploring life after high school in the skilled trades” worksheet.
- Introduce the activity by explaining to students that when beginning to plan the future they want for themselves, it can be helpful to consider how the school subjects they’re most interested in can lead to a successful career choice.
- Tell students that the words “career,” “job,” and “occupation” are often used interchangeably; ask them to quickly list some of the similarities and differences between these terms.
- Be sure students understand key vocabulary:
 - **Career:** A profession that may span your lifetime and includes your education, training, professional memberships, volunteering, and full history of paid work. Can be a synonym for occupation.
 - **Job:** A specific arrangement where you do tasks for an employer.
 - **Occupation:** Describes a type of work with associated tasks, education and training, typical wages, work settings, and more. Can be a synonym for career.
- Explain that students will visit the U.S. Department of Labor-sponsored careeronestop.org website to select a career in the skilled trades and learn what that career involves and what education or training options might help them prepare for it.

Group work

- Ask students to form pairs or small groups to complete this activity.
- Direct students to visit [careeronestop.org’s “Occupation Profile” page at https://www.careeronestop.org/Toolkit/Careers/Occupations/occupation-profile.aspx](https://www.careeronestop.org/Toolkit/Careers/Occupations/occupation-profile.aspx).
- Have students click the “List of occupations” link to see the different types of occupations. Have them click on a career field related to a skilled trade to see a list of specific occupations in that category.
- Ask the pairs or groups to agree on an occupation from the list.
- Have students click on that occupation and enter their location to get an occupation profile for their area.
 - You might consider having the students use the school’s location.

- Ask students to review the occupation profile to answer the “Exploring a career” questions on their worksheet.
- Optional: The occupation profile includes links to colleges and training institutions that may help prepare students for their selected occupation. If there’s time, students can explore these schools and answer the “Digging deeper” questions on their worksheet.
 - In the “Education and experience: to get started” box on the occupation profile, direct students to click on one of the education or training programs listed.
 - This will bring up links to colleges or training institutions that offer programs in this area. Students can click on the “More programs” link to get the full list.
 - Students can choose a college or training institution and explore the school’s website to find out more about the program.
 - Students can list reasons why they would or wouldn’t consider enrolling in the program.

NOTE

While the colleges and training institutions listed will have education or training programs that are relevant to the students’ selected occupations, not all schools will have programs that directly relate to those occupations. Encourage students to identify general courses or programs that are still relevant to their end goal.

Wrap-up

- Bring the students back together and ask a few volunteers to share their selected occupations and what they learned.
- For the optional activity, ask a few students to share information about the program they explored.

Suggested next steps

Consider searching for other activities that address the topics of earning or making money.

Measuring student learning

Assess students’ knowledge by reviewing their answers on the worksheets and, if applicable, observing their responses and listening to their justifications during discussion. **Keep in mind that students’ answers may vary, as there may not be only one right answer.** The important thing is for students to have reasonable justification for their answers.