Solving a career mystery

Students listen to clues about different jobs and work in teams to guess the job title.

Learning goals

Big idea

Different careers require different levels of education and pay different amounts of money.

Essential questions

- What level of education do different careers require?
- How much do people in different kinds of careers earn?

Objectives

- Learn how much education different careers require and how much they may pay
- Reflect on a career that might be right for you

What students will do

- Play a game where they hear clues about specific careers and try to guess the careers.
- Reflect on what career might be right for them.

NOTE

Please remember to consider your students' accommodations and special needs to ensure that all students are able to participate in a meaningful way.

KEY INFORMATION

Building block:

- Financial habits and norms
- Financial knowledge and decision-making skills

Grade level: Elementary school (4–5)

Age range: 9–11

Topic: Earn (Making money)

School subject: English or language arts, Social studies or history

Teaching strategy: Cooperative learning, Gamification

Bloom's Taxonomy level: Understand, Evaluate

Activity duration: 45–60 minutes

STANDARDS

Council for Economic Education
Standard I. Earning income

Jump$tart Coalition
Employment and income – Standard 1

Preparing for this activity

☐ Write the career list in this guide on the board or prepare to project the list on the board.

☐ Print a single-sided copy of the "Career mystery cards" in this guide and cut them out.

What you'll need

THIS TEACHER GUIDE

▪ **Solving a career mystery** (guide)
cfpb_building_block_activities_solving-career-mystery_guide.pdf

STUDENT MATERIALS

▪ **Career list** (in this guide)

▪ **"Career mystery cards"** (in this guide)

Exploring key financial concepts

When you think about what kind of career you want when you grow up, it's important to explore your options. It's also helpful to keep in mind how much education you'll need and how much money you can earn. People who have high-paying careers like doctors or lawyers may earn more money than people in other occupations. But doctors and lawyers have to go to school for much longer before they can start working. Often, people with higher levels of education enter careers that pay more money. People with less education tend to earn less money.

TIP

Because careers, education requirements, and pay levels change, students should be encouraged to always look for the most up-to-date information.

Teaching this activity

Whole-class introduction

▪ Tell students that they'll play a game about careers.

▪ Explain that careers and jobs are different:

  ○ A **job** is a specific arrangement where you do tasks for an employer.

- A **career** is a profession that may span your lifetime and includes your education, training, professional memberships, volunteering, and full history of paid work.
  - For example, someone may have a career as a writer and different jobs writing books, news stories, or web pages during their career.
- Ask students to share examples of different types of careers they've heard of.
- 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.

  - **Earn:** To receive money in exchange for goods or services.

  - **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.

Group work

- Write the career list on the board or project it so each student can see it.
- Divide the class into two groups.
- Place the "Career mystery cards" where students can easily get them.
- Explain the game to the students:
  - You'll choose a scorekeeper or ask a volunteer to keep score.

  - You'll then choose one student from the first group to start the game.

  - That student will pick a "Career mystery card" and read the clues on the card to the second group.

    - The student should pause for a few seconds after reading each clue to give the group a chance to guess the career, using the list shown on the board.
    - Tell students that the clues will start off as general and get more specific as they progress. This means that the career gets easier to guess after more clues are read.

  - If the group guesses correctly, they get a point.

  - If the group hasn't guessed the correct career after the final clue is read, the student will share the answer.

- Next, you'll choose a student from the second group to read a card to the first group, following the same steps above.

- The game will continue until all the cards are read.

- The group with the most correct answers wins.

  - You can set aside one of the cards to use as a tie-breaker if needed.

  - To make the game more competitive, you can give each group extra points if they guess the correct answer before all the clues have been read.

Wrap-up

- Bring the class back together.
- Ask students to share what career they might like to have in the future.
  - Be sure students understand that the career they share doesn't have to be one discussed during the activity.

Suggested next steps

Consider searching for other CFPB activities that address the topic of earning, including making money. Suggested activities include "Choosing a career" or "Comparing careers and income."

Measuring student learning

Students' responses during the game and the discussion can give you a sense of their understanding. **Keep in mind that students' answers may vary.** The important thing is for students to have reasonable justification for their answers.

Career list

Auto mechanic	Lawyer
Chef	Nurse
Elementary school teacher	Plumber
Fashion designer	Veterinarian
Firefighter	Waiter or waitress
Hair stylist	Web developer

Career mystery cards

Cut apart the cards on the next three pages. Before you start the game, shuffle the cards so their order doesn't match the list on the board. The career and salary information is from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; salaries have been rounded to the nearest thousand.

What am I?

1. I graduated after four years of college and then received three years of specialized training.

2. I make around $120,000 a year and I don't earn tips.

3. I work inside, in an office.

4. I don't wear a uniform or other special clothes.

5. I work with people.

6. I mostly work with the law.

What's my career?
Lawyer

What am I?

1. I graduated from high school.

2. I make around $48,000 a year and I don't earn tips.

3. I work inside, but not in an office.

4. I wear a uniform or special clothes.

5. I work with people.

6. I mostly work with food.

What's my career?
Chef

What am I?

1. I didn't graduate from high school.

2. I make around $22,000 a year and I earn tips.

3. Sometimes I work outside, but mostly I work inside. I don't work in an office.

4. I wear a uniform or special clothes.

5. I work with people.

6. I mostly work with food.

What's my career?
Waiter or waitress

What am I?

1. I graduated from a technical school after high school.

2. I make around $54,000 a year and I don't usually earn tips.

3. Sometimes I work outside, but mostly I work inside. I don't work in an office.

4. I don't wear a uniform or special clothes.

5. I work with people.

6. I mostly work with pipes.

What's my career?
Plumber

What am I?

1. I graduated after four years of college.

2. I make around $73,000 per year and I don't earn tips.

3. I work inside, sometimes in an office.

4. I don't wear a uniform or special clothes.

5. I work with people.

6. I mostly work with clothing.

What's my career?
Fashion designer

What am I?

1. I graduated after four years of college.

2. I make around $72,000 per year and I don't earn tips.

3. I work inside, sometimes in an office.

4. I wear a uniform or special clothes.

5. I work with people.

6. I mostly work to make people healthy.

What's my career?
Nurse

What am I?

1. I graduated after two years of college.

2. I make $70,000 a year and I don't earn tips.

3. I work inside, in an office.

4. I don't wear a uniform or special clothes.

5. I work with people.

6. I mostly work on computers.

What's my career?
Web developer

What am I?

1. I graduated after four years of college and then received four years of specialized training.

2. I make $94,000 a year and I don't earn tips.

3. I work inside, in an office.

4. I wear a uniform or special clothes.

5. I work with people and animals.

6. I mostly work with people's pets.

What's my career?
Veterinarian

What am I?

1. I graduated from high school and had special training after high school.

2. I make $50,000 a year and I don't earn tips.

3. I work inside and outside, but not in an office.

4. I wear a uniform or special clothes.

5. I work with people.

6. I mostly work on fires.

What's my career?
Firefighter

What am I?

1. I graduated from high school and have a special license.

2. I make $25,000 per year and I earn tips.

3. I work inside, but not in an office.

4. I don't wear a uniform or special clothes.

5. I work with people.

6. I mostly work with hair.

What's my career?
Hair stylist

What am I?

1. I graduated after four years of college and have a special license.

2. I make $58,000 a year and I don't earn tips.

3. I work inside, but not in an office.

4. I don't wear a uniform or special clothes.

5. I work with people.

6. I mostly work in elementary school classrooms.

What's my career?
Elementary school teacher

What am I?

1. I graduated from high school and have a special license.

2. I make $41,000 a year and I don't earn tips.

3. I work inside, but not in an office.

4. Sometimes I wear a uniform or special clothes.

5. I work with people.

6. I mostly work with cars.

What's my career?
Auto mechanic