

Choosing a career/job can seem like a lonely and confusing undertaking. It shouldn't be. There are practical steps you can take to help you to make a good choice.

It is important that you base your career decisions on solid information about yourself. There are three areas that deserve special attention: your interests, skills and values. This check-list will help you take inventory of these factors.

SELF-ASSESSMENT

INTERESTS/SKILLS: what you like and do well

As you plan your career, it is important that you evaluate the skills you have acquired and enjoy using. Assess your skills realistically and honestly. **Check all the items that describe you most of the time:**

Experience-Based Skills are those which relate specifically to being able to do a particular job. These are gained through personal experience, reading, voluntary work, courses or employment. You have developed many such skills. Some examples:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art/design | <input type="checkbox"/> Research |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sales/persuasion | <input type="checkbox"/> Statistics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Computer programming | <input type="checkbox"/> Using power/hand tools |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Word processing | <input type="checkbox"/> Marketing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Interior decoration | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreational leadership |
| <input type="checkbox"/> News/magazine writing | <input type="checkbox"/> Human service/helping people |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Technical writing | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

Self-Management Skills (personal strengths) are related to your personality. They determine how you perform work within an organisation. You normally acquire this group of skills in your early years from family, peers and school. They are further developed as you gain more educational and work experience.

As you evaluate which personal strengths you may possess, recall words people have used to describe you. Also think of compliments family, friends, teachers, etc., may have given you about some of your personal characteristics.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Decisive | <input type="checkbox"/> Enthusiastic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patient | <input type="checkbox"/> Cooperative |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Able to meet deadlines | <input type="checkbox"/> Honest |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Organized | <input type="checkbox"/> Flexible |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energetic | <input type="checkbox"/> Strong work ethic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Confident | <input type="checkbox"/> Able to work under stress |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Humorous | <input type="checkbox"/> Positive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Able to maintain confidentiality | <input type="checkbox"/> Show initiative |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Able to take risks | <input type="checkbox"/> Sensitive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assertive | <input type="checkbox"/> Persistent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reliable | <input type="checkbox"/> Resourceful/creative problem solver |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diplomatic/tactful | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

Transferable ("Life") Skills are general skills which can be applied in a wide variety of work settings. You acquired them either as "natural" talents, or through education or training.

Communication

- ___ Writing
- ___ Public speaking
- ___ Persuasion
- ___ Sales
- ___ Negotiation
- ___ Listening

Numerical

- ___ Budgeting/managing money
- ___ Work well with numbers
- ___ Computer skills
- ___ Solve math problems

Creative

- ___ Artistic
- ___ Imaginative with things
- ___ Imaginative with ideas
- ___ Generate new ideas easily

Social/Interpersonal

- ___ Deal effectively with customers/the public
- ___ At ease socially
- ___ Work well in groups/committees
- ___ Able to take criticism

Work with Others

- ___ Supervision
- ___ Teaching/training
- ___ Coaching
- ___ Advising

Investigative

- ___ Research/finding information
- ___ Scientific curiosity
- ___ Problem solving

Managerial

- ___ Ability to organize self and others
- ___ Planning
- ___ Attention to detail
- ___ Decision-making
- ___ Time management

Manual/Physical

- ___ Mechanical reasoning
- ___ Construction
- ___ Manual dexterity/good with my hands
- ___ Spatial perception/able to visualize 3 dimensional objects
- ___ Physical stamina

Another way to categorize your interests is by the type of people that you identify with. Research shows that you will be happiest in a job which attracts people with interests similar to yours. Read the following descriptions of personality types and rank the top three that best describe you:

- ___ Realistic: people who enjoy concrete, physical tasks. These may require athletic or mechanical ability. People in this group may also like machines/tools, animals or the outdoors.
- ___ Investigative: people who enjoy tasks calling for problem-solving, analyzing, evaluating or seeking new solutions.
- ___ Artistic: people who enjoy creating or interpreting artistic forms, synthesizing information and viewing ideas and objects in an imaginative way.
- ___ Social: people who enjoy helping, serving, teaching and communicating with people.
- ___ Enterprising: people who enjoy persuading or directing others, selling products or services, planning and supervising people projects.
- ___ Conventional: people who enjoy detailed tasks which require systematic or routine processing of information or data.

(Adapted from the work of Dr. John L.

Holland)

An even simpler way to identify your interests is to categorise them according to their primary focus. Rank order the following categories:

- ___ data: working with numbers or other kinds of data.

___ things: doing work with your hands or using equipment or tools.

___ ideas: working with concepts or theories.

___ people: doing things with or for people.

VALUES: what is important to you

Each of us has developed a system of values -- a basis on which we make choices and decisions about what we will and will not do. These values are important to your career decision. If you choose to pursue a career which is at odds with what you consider to be important, you will probably not be happy with your choice. Some examples of values are listed below. Select the top three that are important to you.

- ___ Advancement -- able to move ahead in your career and take on more responsibility
- ___ Economic/financial -- having a lot of money and possessions
- ___ Social service -- service to others, helping people
- ___ Independence -- freedom to work independently and make own choices
- ___ Environmental responsibility -- caring about the environment
- ___ Global responsibility -- caring about social and world problems
- ___ Family -- having time for family and friends
- ___ Security -- feeling safe, having basic needs met
- ___ Power -- having control or authority over others
- ___ Prestige -- having others look up to you
- ___ Creativity -- able to find creative solutions or work artistically

PERSONAL HISTORY

To identify what you might enjoy doing with your future, it is often helpful to look at your past. The kinds of jobs you've had, hobbies, books you read, etc., can all be clues to what you might enjoy doing for a living. The following sections will help you to take stock of your past experience.

WORK EXPERIENCE

List the jobs that you've held.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

What was your favourite job? Why? _____

CLUBS/ORGANISATIONS

List the voluntary, community organisations to which you have belonged.

HOBBIES/INTERESTS

What do you do in your spare time? List any special interests you have.

READING

Do you enjoy reading? _____ What types of things do you read: books ____, magazines ____, newspapers ____
? What topics or types of stories do you find yourself drawn to?

CAREER DREAMS

Do you ever daydream about careers or your future? Did you have a dream career when you were younger?
These can often offer helpful insights into suitable careers. _

PEOPLE CONTACT

Most people will interact with others to some degree on the job. What would be the ideal level of interaction
for you? Place an "x" on the continuum to indicate your preference:

Working alone One-on-one Small groups Large groups

THE BOTTOM LINE

Although almost everyone would like to make a lot of money, how truly important is money to you? What is
the lowest salary level you are willing to consider:

Below average ____

Average salary for a graduate ____

Above average ____

ACADEMICS

CLASSES

Place an "L" (like) next to your favourite subjects and a "D" (dislike) next to your least favourite, then circle the classes you've actually taken.

___ **Social Sciences**

- ___ Anthropology
- ___ Criminology/Criminal Justice
- ___ Family Studies
- ___ Geography
- ___ History
- ___ Law
- ___ Psychology
- ___ Political Science
- ___ Social Work
- ___ Sociology

___ **Science**

- ___ Biology
- ___ Chemistry
- ___ Environmental Studies
- ___ Geology
- ___ Physics

___ **Languages**

- ___ Foreign Language _____
- ___ Linguistics

___ **Humanities**

- ___ English
- ___ Philosophy

___ **Math**

- ___ Advanced Math (calculus, trigonometry, etc.)
- ___ Basic Math (arithmetic, algebra, geometry, etc.)
- ___ Statistics

___ **Business**

- ___ Accounting
- ___ Economics
- ___ Finance
- ___ Human Resource Management
- ___ Management
- ___ Marketing
- ___ MIS
- ___ Retail Merchandising

___ **Education**

___ **Communication**

- ___ Advertising
- ___ Communication Systems Management
- ___ Interpersonal/Organisational Communications
- ___ Journalism
- ___ Public Relations
- ___ Radio/TV
- ___ Visual Communications

___ **Engineering**

- ___ Aviation
- ___ Chemical
- ___ Civil
- ___ Computer Science
- ___ Electrical
- ___ Industrial
- ___ Mechanical

___ **Arts**

- ___ Art History
- ___ Comparative Arts
- ___ Dance
- ___ Film
- ___ Graphic Design
- ___ Interior Design
- ___ Music
- ___ Photography
- ___ Theatre
- ___ Visual Arts (painting, drawing, sculpture, etc.)

___ **Health/Sports**

- ___ Health
- ___ Exercise/Athletics
- ___ Health Administration
- ___ Hearing and Speech Science
- ___ Industrial Hygiene
- ___ Nutrition
- ___ Recreation
- ___ Sports

___ Other _____

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Some academic programs require foreign language studies. How much foreign language have you had so far in either school?

COMPUTER SKILLS

Computer abilities and interests can figure into a lot of different career areas. List any computer hardware/software/languages with which you are familiar.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Because most colleges have competitive admissions, your chances of enrolling in a particular college will depend on your academic achievement. _____

COLLEGE CHOICES

After completing this sheet, which colleges do you feel are your most likely choices at this point? Don't be concerned if you are still unsure. You will develop clearer ideas as you work through this process. Indicate next to each college a "Y" for yes, "N" for no, or an "M" for maybe.

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arts | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Health & Human Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering & Technology | <input type="checkbox"/> Sciences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Fine Arts | <input type="checkbox"/> University |

CRITERIA

List any admissions criteria that you will need to meet in order to enrol in programs you are considering (portfolios, auditions, interviews, prerequisite classes, etc.).

Now that you have completed your self-assessment check-list, review your answers. Look for any patterns in your responses. Are there any interests or skills that seem to be similar to each other or are repeated in different places? These may indicate good starting places for further investigation. Do any careers/courses come to mind right away? Make note of these below.
