

# Takin' Care of Business



Mr. Breitsprecher's Edition

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## Choosing a Career Path after High School

Are you finishing high school and wondering what the next step should be? Do you wonder what kind of job might be right for you? If you are like many young people, you may not be sure of what you want to do. Now is a good time to explore your own strengths and interests, as well as the wealth of career fields and job paths that may be possible for you.

### Step 1: Talk to Guidance Counselors and Career Services.

A good place to begin is the guidance counseling and career preparation services offered at your own school. Make an appointment with an advisor and see what they may suggest. The school will mostly likely have special resources and information about colleges, career schools, vocational schools, military service, or other post-secondary education opportunities.

**Step 2: Think About Your Own Strengths and Interests.** Starting by thinking about yourself. What are your strengths, skills, areas of interest, and career expectations? What are your work values? Do you value independence in a job?

Leadership opportunities? Feelings of achievement or reward? Do you like to work with your hands? Do computers interest you? Are you a "people" person? What kind of work environment do you envision? **careeronestop.org** offers a self-assessment that measures your skills, interests, and work values. This is a great place to start when you are considering a future career path.

**Step 3: Explore Different Kinds of Careers.** There are hundreds of different career paths that you can consider. There are some you may not even know exist! Take some time to do some exploration. On, there are career exploration profiles of over 900 career paths. You can learn



about wage information, projections for job growth, kinds of work activities, and the type of training you will need. **careeronestop.org** also provides Career and Cluster Videos which help you visualize what goes on in different careers.

Another good place to learn about job profiles is the Department of Labor's Occupational Outlook Handbook. This handbook describes hundreds of job positions, and includes job outlook projections, wage and salary information, and detailed descriptions of what is expected on the job.

Remember to keep in mind your self-assessment results. It's important to choose a career that is a good fit with your interests and strengths.

Your job exploration doesn't have to stop with your online searches. Another way to explore career options is to talk with people you know. For example, talk to your friends about their parents' careers. Or talk with your own relatives or your neighbors. If one of their careers sounds interesting, try to schedule a time to talk with them. You can even strike up a conversation about career choices with people you meet along the way, such as the people who work in your doctor's office, dental office, pharmacy, post office, bank, or other places where you regularly go.

**Step 4: Plan Your Career.** Once you have identified a career field that interests you, the next step is to plan your career. The first step is to determine what kind of training or education is necessary for your job field, as well as to consider financial aid. Begin looking at the colleges or career training schools that offer programs in your field. Ask to speak with admissions officers and career development specialists to help make sure you are choosing a training program that is a good fit for your goals.

Think beyond your education too. Think about where you hope to be in the next 10 years. Think about the opportunities for advancement that your career may have, and set achievable but challenging goals for yourself. **CareerOneStep** ([careeronestop.org](http://careeronestop.org)) provides some useful goal-setting advice. Even though the career plans you make right after high school may likely change, it's important to spell out a plan to help keep you focused on the kind of career path that you want.

Finishing high school can be an exciting time in your life, and also one that is filled with many choices. It's important to take your time to map out a future that is rewarding for you!

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