

# WORKING TOWARD YOUR GOALS

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## AGENDA

- SESSION 1
  - Starter
  - In the Future
  - A Career Hypothesis
- SESSION 2
  - A Career Hypothesis: Show Results
  - Why Work?
  - Conclusion
- Student Assessment

### Objectives

Students will identify their career goals.

Students will recognize how education can help them achieve their goals.

Students will identify the steps to reaching their career goals.

Students will recognize the importance of short-term employment to achieving their long-term career goals.

### Materials Needed

- Session 1: Journals or notebook paper, a dictionary (Part I)

- Session 1: Four job postings requiring different levels of skill, education, and experience (Part I)
- Session 1: One copy of the “Job Analysis” activity sheet for each student (Part I)
- Session 1: Internet access or books/articles about securing jobs (Part II)
- *Note: If possible, arrange for a school counselor to attend the second half of Session 1 for student interviews*
- Session 2: Poster paper, old magazines, tape, glue, markers, scissors, etc. (Part I)

## SESSION 1

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### Starter (3 minutes)

**Note:** This lesson has students consider goals they have for the future. If possible, consider teaching your students the lessons in the Goal Setting module before this lesson, so they will be familiar with goal setting concepts.

Write the following quote on the board: “The future depends on what you do today.”

Ask students to interpret the quote. Discuss the relationship between goal setting and success in life.

Explain that in this lesson students will identify careers they may be interested in and learn skills that will help them achieve their goals.

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### Part I In the Future (15 minutes)

*Purpose:* Students identify their career aspirations and recognize how education can help them achieve these goals.

#### 1. Students visualize their goals for the future.

Ask students to close their eyes. Say, “Imagine yourself 15 years from now. What are you doing with your life? Think about some of the goals you have set for yourself. Have you achieved those goals? How are you making a living?”

Ask students to open their eyes. Allow them a few minutes to write about what they were thinking as you spoke. Ask them to include details of their career goals.

#### 2. Students share their career goals.

When students have finished writing, ask volunteers to share what they wrote. As students share their future goals, write their responses on the board.

Explain to students that no matter what their goals are, they will need a plan to achieve them.

#### 3. Students distinguish between jobs and careers.

Explain to students that the writing they just did was about their career goals. Ask students if they know the difference between the words “job” and “career.” If necessary, have two volunteers look up the words in a dictionary and read the definitions out loud. Lead students to the understanding that “job” refers to working and getting paid. Explain that jobs are often short term. Tell students that “career” indicates something long term that people plan for and strive to advance in.

Explain that people change jobs often, especially when they are young. Tell students that it is also becoming more common for people to change their career paths. (Provide an example of this, preferably one from personal experience or knowledge.) Share with students how statistics indicate that they are likely to change careers several times during their lives and that they will have many jobs in each career. Point out that this makes mastering the skills of looking for a job important.

Explain to students that you had them begin by thinking about their long-term career goals because they will ideally choose short-term jobs that fit with those goals.

#### **4. Students analyze the requirements and compensations of several jobs.**

Before class, identify four job listings in your area from an online job board (for example, [www.indeed.com](http://www.indeed.com) or [www.monster.com](http://www.monster.com)). Ensure the options require different levels of skill, education, and experience (such as a mover, administrative assistant, computer technician, and teacher). Either print the postings for each student or display them where the entire class can see them.

Explain to students that they are going to compare and contrast different jobs. Distribute copies of the “[Job Analysis](#)” activity sheet to students. Have a volunteer read out loud to the class a job posting that does not require any previous experience. Ask students what skills an applicant for this job needs, writing their responses on the activity sheet in the box labeled “Skills.”

Then, ask students what level of education is needed for the job (e.g., a high school diploma or a college degree). Instruct students to fill in the “School” box appropriately.

Next, have students identify the job’s pay and benefits. (If students do not understand what benefits are, explain health care coverage, vacation time, tuition reimbursement, etc.) Have students add the appropriate information to the activity sheet; then, ask if they think there is an opportunity for advancement.

Ask students to consider whether this job is something that they would want for a career, not just for a short-term job. Have them fill in this information in the final column.

#### **5. Students recognize that education can help them achieve their career goals.**

Discuss each of the other job advertisements you selected. Have students fill in the boxes.

When they are finished, ask students which job they would choose and why. After students have responded, challenge them to find the relationship between education, salary, benefits, and advancement. Students should notice that more education brings better salary, benefits, and advancement opportunities.

Explain that a good education can help people secure competitive jobs and achieve career goals in almost any field.

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**Part II A Career Hypothesis (30 minutes)**

*Purpose:* Students identify the steps to reaching their career goals.

**1. Students hypothesize about what is necessary for them to reach their career goals.**

Introduce the concept of planning for a future career by explaining the steps that you personally took to become a teacher. Include your high school education, temporary jobs, college experience, special training, and other factors that helped you. Tell students they need to think about what they can do now and in the future to reach their goals. Explain that you're going to ask them to make some guesses about what they'll need to do to have the careers they desire.

Ask students to define "hypothesis." Explain that in science, a hypothesis is a proposed testable solution or educated guess that scientists make after gathering information.

Instruct students to write a hypothesis concerning what they need to do to achieve their career goals. Point out that they gathered information when they looked at the job postings to see what is necessary to get certain jobs, and that you gave them more information when you told them how you became a teacher. Remind students to consider factors such as education, work experience, special talents or abilities, and money as they write their hypotheses.

Allow students 10 minutes to write their hypotheses.

**2. Students share their career-path hypotheses.**

When 10 minutes have passed, ask volunteers to share their ideas with the class. Allow students to add to and alter their own hypotheses if other students' ideas work for them.

Explain that scientists always test their hypotheses to see if they will work. Ask students to suggest ways they can test their hypotheses. (*Students should suggest: research on the internet, interviews, consulting the school counseling department, speaking with someone from a human resources department, consulting professionals in their desired fields, etc.*) List all resources on the board.

**3. Students research what is required to achieve their career goals.**

Group students with similar career goals. Challenge the groups to use the resources they identified to test and modify their hypotheses. Explain that they have the rest of the session and until the next session to state a conclusion about the steps they need to take to build their careers. Direct students to use the books you have available, the internet, interviews with a school counselor, and other references to test their hypotheses.

Conclude by informing students that in the next session they will have 25 minutes to create a visual representation of their findings. Instruct students to bring to class any visuals they encounter in their research that they would like to incorporate into their presentations (e.g., charts, photographs, worksheets).

## SESSION 2

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### Part I A Career Hypothesis: Show Results (30 minutes)

*Purpose:* Students create visual representations of their career plans.

#### 1. Students report on the steps they need to take to reach their career goals.

Have ready poster paper, construction paper, old magazines, tape, glue, markers, scissors, and so forth for students to use.

Explain to students that they have had time to discover the steps they will need to take to pursue their career goals. Have students return to their groups from Part II of Session 1. Tell the groups to work for 25 minutes to create visuals that represent the steps necessary to achieving their career goals. Encourage students to use charts, cartoons, flowcharts, photographs, etc.

#### 2. Students discuss the steps to reaching their career goals.

When 25 minutes have passed, have the groups display their visuals around the classroom. Point out that students found that education, experience, and talent are all important to achieving career goals.

Remind students that their career plans will have to be continually revised and updated. Point out that they may change their career goals a number of times during their lives; each time, they will need to revise their plans.

Ask the groups to share the most interesting or surprising thing that they discovered as they tested their career-goal hypotheses.

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### Part II Why Work? (15 minutes)

*Purpose:* Students recognize the importance of short-term employment to achieving their long-term career goals.

#### 1. Students realize that holding a part-time job is a meaningful career strategy.

Remind students that they recognized that experience helps in achieving career goals.

Lead students to the understanding that they gain experience when they work in a field related to their career goals. Prompt students by saying, "If I wanted to be a musician, what kinds of jobs would give me valuable experience?" (*Students should respond: working in a music store or playing in a band.*) Explain to students that those kinds of experiences would allow you to learn more about music, making you a better musician. Also, point out that you'd be earning money while you learned.

#### 2. Students recognize how working helps them learn life skills.

Ask students to suggest other reasons, besides knowledge of the job, that employers look for people with experience. Lead students to the understanding that someone who has held a job before will have learned some basic skills related to work. Point out that these basic skills will help students succeed in their careers no matter what their goals are.

Ask students to suggest some basic skills that they might learn by working. Write student responses on the board. (*Students might respond: reliability [being on time and prepared], solving problems and making decisions independently when possible, communication skills [getting along with co-workers, resolving differences, communicating with supervisors, etc.], financial responsibility [handling their paychecks and perhaps customers' money], or knowledge about taxes and Social Security deductions.*)

### **3. Students brainstorm part-time jobs that will help them achieve their career goals.**

Say to students, “If a student wants to be a doctor, what kind of job might she get now, while she is in high school, that will help her accomplish this goal?” Have students brainstorm some possibilities. Write responses on the board. (*Students might respond: work in a hospital, at a pharmacy, or with the school nurse.*)

Students will have to take various things into consideration when preparing for a future career and looking for a part-time job. Point out that for someone who wants to become a doctor, a great high school job experience might be to work in a hospital. However, many of these types of positions are volunteer and unpaid. If a student needs to earn money, they might have to consider a job unrelated to the medical field or balance a paid job with the hospital volunteer position. Explain that it is important to weigh all of the consequences.

Repeat the activity with other occupations in which students have shown interest.

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### Conclusion (2 minutes)

Ask students to describe how these sessions have helped them clarify their career paths. Tell them that the following lessons will provide them with the tools to secure the jobs they've identified. Elicit from students the following **key points** that were taught in this lesson:

- A good education helps people achieve their career goals.
- If you know what is needed to have the career you want, you can take these steps to get you there: graduation, higher education or training, and work experience.
- Part-time jobs not only pay money but can also provide experience in a career field.

### Student Assessment

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#### SESSION 1

1. Explain the difference between a job and a career.
2. What is one of your career goals?
3. What are some of the steps you must take to achieve your career goals?

#### SESSION 2

1. List three positive benefits of getting a part-time job.
2. What can you do now to work toward achieving your career goals?



## LESSON EXTENSIONS

### Using Quotations

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“Strivers achieve what dreamers believe.”

As a class, discuss the importance of action in realizing a dream. Explain that everyone has a dream career, but not everyone takes the steps they need to make their dream a reality.

### Addressing Multiple Learning Styles

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Have students fold a piece of paper into quarters. In the fourth box, have students draw a cartoon showing themselves at their dream jobs sometime in the future. In the first three boxes, have them illustrate the steps needed to realize those dreams, with deadlines if desired.

### Writing in Your Journal

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Have students think about why a particular career is interesting to them. Have them write about why they think this career will be a good fit for who they are and the kind of adult they want to become.

Have each student exchange their work with a classmate for feedback.

### Using Technology

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Have students search the internet for a publication about the career they've chosen (e.g., *New England Journal of Medicine*, *Harvard Law Review*, *Instructor*, *Variety*). Have them write a review of the publication that gives other students an overview of the magazine's regular features and content.

Have students present their information to the class. Place their reviews in a binder of job-hunting resources.

## Homework

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Have students arrange to shadow someone at work in their desired profession. Have them write a diary describing what this person's day is like.

Have students present their results to the class. Place their work in a binder of job-hunting resources for in-class use.

## Additional Resources

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Have students read *Teenagers Preparing for the Real World* by Chad Foster (available at [www.chadfoster.com](http://www.chadfoster.com)). It has great advice for teens on how to find the work they love, with the observation that they'll spend 86,000 hours of their lives doing that work.

Have small groups list tips for finding the work they love.

# JOB ANALYSIS

Directions: Complete the chart below by writing the appropriate information in each box.

	SKILLS	SCHOOL	SALARY	BENEFITS	CAREER
Job #1:					
Job #2:					
Job #3:					
Job #4:					