



Career Path

BIG IDEA(S):

- What is a career cluster?
- What is a career pathway?
- How can career clusters and pathways help me discover and plan for careers that align with my interests and experiences?

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- Devices with Internet access, one per participant or as many as possible
- Career Pathways handout
- Career Investigation Questions
- Lined paper or notebooks

OVERVIEW

In this eighth and final session, young people will investigate future careers. They will use career clusters and career pathways to find career possibilities that match their interests and experiences. They will then perform research to learn more about these opportunities as they begin to plan for their future.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

- Print and copy the handouts and materials listed in the *What You Will Need* section so there are enough for all participants.
- Gather the devices listed in the *What You Will Need* section so there are enough for all participants. If one device per participant is not possible, gather as many as possible.
- Read through the activity to make sure you understand the directions before the session begins.

ENGAGE

- Begin by asking the young people to think back to elementary school.
- Encourage them to discuss with the people around them:
 - When you were little, what did you want to be when you grew up?
 - As you grew up, did this vision change? Why or why not?
- Once groups have had a chance to discuss, ask a few young people to share the results of their conversation with the larger group.

EXPLORE

1. Explain that as our “future” gets closer, it can become even more exciting but also even more intimidating to think about the kind of job you want to have. It may seem intimidating because there are too many possibilities, or it may seem intimidating because you’ve yet to find a career possibility you think would really work for you!
2. Pass out one **Career Cluster handout** to each young person and explain that the U.S. Department of Education has a resource specially designed to help in both situations!
3. Take a moment to read through the *Learn* section to introduce the idea of career clusters and pathways. Be sure everyone understands that a career cluster consists of a large group of careers with common features. These clusters are then broken down into career pathways—or careers that require similar skills, knowledge, and education.
4. Explain that the best way to understand how career clusters and pathways can help their career search is to apply it to themselves! Bring everyone’s attention to the handout’s *Investigate* section and read through #1 together. Give the young people time to complete this step, access the online career quiz, and see which career clusters best match their interests and experiences.
5. As the young people are wrapping up, invite them to share:
 - Was anyone surprised by the results of their quiz? How so?
 - Did anyone’s results prompt them to think in a different way? How so?
6. Before the young people move on to the next part of the handout, pass out one copy of the **Career Investigation Questions** to each person. Explain that everyone is now going to do a little research into some of their career possibilities, and these questions are designed to help them do this! Encourage them to review the questions that are already listed and then jot down additional questions that they would like to ask about a future career.
7. Next, encourage the young people to use these questions to complete #2 on their **Career Cluster handout**. Be sure they understand that:
 - They should use the websites provided to research some of the careers that they noted in #1.
 - As they research these careers, they should look for answers to some or all of their Career Investigation Questions.
8. Before they begin, be sure everyone has at least one piece of lined paper for notetaking. Encourage them to take notes about each career they research on a new sheet of paper (or a different page in their notebook), so it is easy to keep their notes organized. Then give everyone until almost the end of the session to investigate their future careers!
9. Bring everyone back together as the session is coming to a close. Take a moment to discuss:
 - What is one career or career pathway you researched that seems most intriguing to you?
 - What is one goal you can set to help you either learn more about this career or begin down this career pathway?
10. Wrap up by congratulating everyone on working hard to explore their future. Encourage the young people to continue this exploration and use the career pathways to help them set and work toward career-related goals!

MAKE THE CONNECTION

The U.S. Department of Education's sixteen career clusters range from Agriculture, Food, & Natural Resources to Transportation, Distribution, & Logistics. While one career cluster (Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics) is dedicated exclusively to STEM, many—if not all—others have STEM opportunities embedded in them. It's all a matter of figuring out which subjects interest you most. After that, it's easy to find a STEM connection!

EXTEND AND EVALUATE

Do you meet more than once a month? In an upcoming session, you could:

- Conduct another career research day, in which young people continue to investigate career pathways. Consider encouraging them to create a hard or digital copy of a career notebook where they can keep all of their research notes.
- Hold a career interview day, where young people can conduct phone, virtual, or in-person interviews that enable them to explore different career pathways. Work in advance with the young people to set up a date and time and invite guests. The Career Investigation Questions can be used to guide the conversations, but the young people should also prepare a list of their own relevant questions. After the interview is complete, don't forget to have everyone write thank you notes to show appreciation for the interviewees' time.

Learn

It can be exciting *and* intimidating to think about your future and the kind of job you want to have—especially when there are endless possibilities!

Thankfully, the U.S. Department of Education has narrowed down all of the career possibilities into 16 different career clusters. Each cluster—such as Business Management & Administration, Architecture & Construction, and Education & Training—contain a large group of careers that share common features.

The careers in every cluster are then further broken down into different career pathways that require similar skills and knowledge. The careers in the Architecture & Construction cluster, for example, contain three pathways: Design/Pre-Construction, Construction, and Maintenance/Operations. Every pathway outlines steps you can take (such as academic courses and career/technical training) to begin to prepare for careers in this area.

Investigate

Ready to start exploring your future? Below are three ways to use these Career Clusters and Pathways as you begin to investigate and pursue your career goals.

1. **Take a Quiz!** Take the Career Quiz available at careerbridge.wa.gov/Survey_Cluster.aspx to see which career clusters best match your interests and experiences.

Once you get to the Results Page, record your top three clusters below. Then click on these clusters to read more about the careers in each one. As you come across careers that interest you, record them below.

○ **Cluster:** _____

Interesting Careers: _____

○ **Cluster:** _____

Interesting Careers: _____

○ **Cluster:** _____

Interesting Careers: _____

2. **Research, Research, Research:** Another way to learn more about careers that could be a good fit for you is to conduct research. Exploring/investigating can help you learn more about the jobs that interest you now, as well as jobs that could interest you in the future!

Check out the websites below to get started, and use the Career Investigation Questions on page three to help you focus your research.

Suggested Websites:

- U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook: bls.gov/ooh
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, especially for students in grades K–12: bls.gov/k12/home.htm
- CareerOneStop, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor: careeronestop.org

Curious to learn more about careers that interest you? The thought starters below may be helpful as you perform research and/or conduct interviews. Be sure to also add your own questions so you get the answers you're looking for!

1. Which career cluster does this job/career belong to?
2. Salary range:
3. Typical schedule (e.g., Monday to Friday from 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM):
4. Career benefits:
5. Career challenges:
6. Educational requirements/minimum training necessary:
7. Schools/colleges that offer programs for this career choice:
8. Total number of years (post-high school) that the required education/training takes:
9. If there is a particular college or university that you're interested in attending, does that college or university offer the education/training necessary for this career choice?
10. Does this career require any special certification or license? If so, what kind?
11. Does this career require you to continue your education once you've started doing the job?
12. Are there any personal requirements (e.g., writing skills, public speaking, languages, or travel)?
13. What is the work environment like (e.g., indoors/outdoors, office, or lab)?
14. Are there opportunities for advancement? If so, what?
15. Additional questions:

Tip: Brainstorm questions specific to each career you are considering!

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