

CAREER EDUCATION

Lesson 3: After High School— What’s Next?

Objectives: Students will be introduced to the concepts of career planning and character traits, identify their own character traits, and begin to think about their career options.

Materials: The following handouts and resources:

1. Activity 1: Character Traits and Work
2. Activity 3A: Character Traits, Work, and You
3. Activity 3B: Occupational Clusters
4. Local Yellow Pages
5. Local newspaper

Related Content Standards: English/
Language arts, social studies

Lesson Plan

Tell students: Today we’re going to think about what you’re going to do after high school. Many of you expect to live in this same general area, get a job, marry, and have a family. What kind of job will you get? Some of you may not have thought much about finding a job. You may think that something will just “come along,” but without planning, you may end up in a dull job that you don’t like. Others of you may know what kind of jobs you want, but without planning, you may not be able to get those jobs because you lack the necessary skills and training. So *now* is the time to start planning and preparing yourself to get a great job.

It’s all up to you. You can’t control or change some things in your life. You can, however, decide how you want to spend the rest of your life at work. Most people will spend more than 40 years working. If you’re going to do something for 40 years or more, shouldn’t you plan on doing something that you like to do? Successful careers don’t just happen; they must be planned.

If you spend time thinking about and planning for a job, you’re more likely to find one that you like, that meets your needs, and that gives you the satis-

faction that will make you want to go to work every day. How you prepare for your future is up to you.

Activity 1: Character Traits and Work

Ask students: Why do people work? People work for various reasons, including money and financial security, self-esteem, to use talents and skills, to contribute to society, to keep busy, to meet people, to get recognition, to help others, to make the world a better place, to be challenged, etc. Write students’ answers on the board; help them brainstorm as many as possible.

Ask students why they personally want to work. They will give various reasons. Help them see that the reasons they give hint at some *character traits* they may have. Character traits are personal qualities—ways you might describe someone’s personality—such as caring, ambitious, creative, adventurous, or fair. For example, someone who wants to work to help others is probably helpful and caring. Someone who seeks money may be motivated by ambitions for prestige or security. Someone who wants to work to use their talents and skills could well be creative. Someone who enjoys challenges is likely to be adventurous. And someone who wants to make the world a better place is probably interested in fairness and social justice.

People with different character traits tend to like different kinds of work. Here are some examples. Pass out the “Character Traits and Work” handout. Explain that these character traits are not the only ones people have, but they are some of the character traits that most affect career choices.

After students have had a chance to read and discuss the “Character Traits and Work” handout, point out that there are a number of other character traits that are helpful in any kind of job, such as being honest, hard-working, and responsible. Ask students if they can think of any others.

Activity 2: Recognizing My Character Traits

Tell students: We all have a number of character traits. Let’s take a moment now to figure out what yours are. Here’s how: I want you to think of yourself as a product, and your name as your own private brand. It sounds really weird, but it will help you recognize your character traits. Your name—your brand—is the image you present to different people. A brand is the trademark or

distinctive name that identifies a product, a manufacturer, or an idea.

Write your name on a piece of paper. This is your brand name, just as “McDonald’s” is the brand name of a particular fast-food chain, and “Nike” is the brand name of a particular kind of athletic gear. And just like “McDonald’s” and “Nike” suggest certain qualities to consumers, your name suggests certain qualities to those who know you.

Make an equal sign after your name, and think of the qualities this “brand name” suggests to your friends, family, and teachers or other adults. (Perhaps your friends, family, and teachers see you in different ways; in this case, you might want to make a few different lists. You don’t have to show your paper to anyone else; it’s just for you and won’t be collected.) Do you think they consider you easy-going? Funny? Intelligent? Shy? Adventurous? Stubborn? Imaginative? A good listener? Quick-tempered or slow to anger? Careful or clumsy? Talkative or quiet? Patient? Ambitious? Someone who is honest and fair? The answers to these questions reveal many of your character traits.

You also have some character traits that other people, even people who are close to you, can’t always see.

Take a moment now to think about what makes you feel good, deep inside. We all like to feel good about ourselves, and we tend to act in a way that makes us feel good. But what makes me feel pleased with myself may not be what makes you feel good. Everyone wants to love and be loved; beyond that, we have different motives for acting the way we do. Some of us do things because we want to be well-known and admired. Some of us do things because we like to help others. Think about why you do things. What makes you feel good about yourself: is it creating something original, such as a picture or a song or a recipe? Is it figuring out how to do a complicated project? Is it challenging yourself physically, for example running a race, or intellectually, like learning a computer game or reading a book? Is it competing against others and winning? Maybe it’s doing what your religion teaches? Or helping to right a wrong or to make your community a better place?

Perhaps you have several of these motives or some others altogether. Write down what you do that makes you feel good about yourself, and why

you do it. These inner motives are important character traits too.

Activity 3: Character Traits, Work, and You

Tell students: Understanding your character traits can help you see which jobs are most likely to satisfy you. Give each student a “Character Traits, Work, and You” worksheet. Remind students that the character traits listed are not the only ones, but they are some, of the traits that most affect career choices. Tell them to use the “Character Traits and Work” exercise from Activity 1 and the listing of jobs on the “Occupational Clusters” handout (pass this out) as references to help them complete this assignment.

When they are finished, have them discuss their answers with the class. Which careers do they seem suited for, according to their worksheet? Do any of these careers in fact appeal to them? Which ones?

Activity 4: Searching for Businesses or Jobs of Interest

Have students search the telephone book’s Yellow Pages or the local newspaper’s classified ads for five businesses or jobs in which they might have an interest. Ask them to explain what appeals to them about each business or job, and what reservations or questions they have about each. (These need not be jobs the students are qualified for right now; the education, training, and experience needed for each job should be part of the class discussion.)

Closure: Tell students: What does it take to be successful? A man named Ben Sweet once said, “The greatest success is successful self-acceptance.” Our character traits, along with our interests, abilities, future dreams, and other things, make up who we are. When we learn to like who we are, we can accept ourselves. And accepting ourselves as we are is the most important (and sometimes the hardest) success of all.

In this unit, you’ve taken an important first step toward future success by exploring your character traits and thinking about the kinds of work that could suit someone with your personality. Our next unit will explore your interests and aptitudes, so you can further focus on what kind of jobs you might like and succeed at.

Assessment: You might collect and grade students’ “Character Traits, Work and You” worksheets to determine how well they have understood the concept of “character traits” and their connection to career options. Since this was a worksheet and not a finished report, however, this grade should not count heavily toward students’ final grades in the class.

Extension Activities

Service Learning: Student volunteers may meet together and plan a service project for their community based on their shared idea of a school or community need that they can fulfill. Such a project will teach students many things about planning and organization, and can help them explore various career fields. Providing a service is also an excellent credit on future job resumes and college applications. Planning and financial help may be available from area civic organizations, the school or PTA, or your local government.

Interview Parents: Students can learn much from talking to their parents or other significant adults about why they chose their occupations. Have them interview parents about their character traits and how the work they do suits (or doesn’t suit) their personalities. Other possible questions for students to ask: When you were my age, what kind of work did you think you’d do as a grown-up? Did you end up doing this? Why or why not? How did you prepare yourself to get your first job(s)? Have you changed careers during your life? If you did, why did you change? What personal qualities or character traits do you think are most important for your kind of work? For any work? Do you have any advice for young people starting out? Encourage students to recognize that non-paid labor such as parenting and homemaking is work, too, and to do these jobs well requires certain character traits (and experiences or training) like any other job.

Students may report their results to the class, or they might write them up as brief “work biographies” of their parents. Studs Terkel’s classic book, *Working: People Talk About What They Do All Day and How They Feel About It* (paperback, Ballantine 1990), offers an example of such biographical reporting; it’s based on the author’s interviews with ordinary Americans from all walks of life.

Additional Resources

1. Have students explore career options on the Internet. One good Web site is www.career-builder.com. This site lists local jobs of all kinds and allows them to post resumes, get advice, and check out resources for job hunting.
2. Another helpful Web site is the United States Department of Labor’s *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, available online at www.bls.gov/oco or by mail from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Ofc. of Occupational Statistics and Employment Projections, Suite 2135, 2 Mass. Ave. NE, Washington, DC, 20212-0001, or in your local public library. Among other helpful information, this site lists projected areas of growth in the labor market—which fields will be needing more workers in the coming years (and which are shrinking).
3. Tom Peters’ idea of “branding” oneself (that is, creating a strategy to sell yourself in today’s tough job market) could be helpful to students. They can explore it at www.bottomlinesecrets.com/blpnet/article.html?article_id=24132. They might also follow Mr. Peters’ suggestions about “how to create your own marketing plan” as a homework assignment.

ACTIVITY 1

Character Traits and Work

People with different character traits tend to like different kinds of work. Some examples:

CARING teens might organize a holiday party at a day-care center or nursing home, or help new students get acquainted at school. They might babysit or volunteer at a hospital or soup kitchen, or work at a camp or recreational center. Caring for and helping others is important to them. Good career fields include law enforcement, social work, teaching, therapy, nursing and other health care, dentistry, childcare, the clergy, real estate, and veterinary medicine.

DETAIL-ORIENTED teens might serve as treasurer or secretary of a club, edit the school newspaper, or discover a talent for auto repair, computer programming, or organizing large CD collections. These people are able to focus on details and to see how the details fit into larger patterns. If they are interested in a complicated project, they have the patience to break it down into small parts and to do each part carefully. A good summer or volunteer job for them would use their attention to detail, such as library shelver, carpenter's apprentice, or waiter/waitress.

Possible careers include librarian, engineer, construction contractor and cost estimator, copyeditor, carpenter, insurance underwriter, administrator, computer programmer, court reporter, health and science technician, clerk, secretary, bookkeeper, physicist, and mechanic.

CREATIVE teens might help decorate for a school event, design logos for groups they're involved in, write for the school newspaper, or play in a band. They might find themselves drawing pictures or thinking up lyrics when they should be concentrating on classwork. Summer or volunteer jobs like teaching art at a day camp, working in a museum, painting a mural for a store owner, or interning at a local newspaper can let them use and explore their talents more productively. For creative people, finding a way to express the ideas and images in their imaginations is very important; they often use the arts as outlets. But creative people aren't found only in the arts. Careers where creativity is prized include architect, commercial artist, musician, composer, dancer, choreographer, photographer, set designer, software developer, writer, editor, fashion designer, research scientist, chef, interior decorator, actor, director, craftsman, small business owner, entertainer, landscape architect, and advertising director.

AMBITIOUS teens might organize a committee to get themselves elected to a school office, or take care to have the clothes, friends, and activities of the "in" crowd at school. They might volunteer to help in a local political campaign, think up plans to get rich, or look for chances to meet prominent businesspeople, attorneys, or elected officials. "Looking good," impressing others, and being well-known are important to them. Ambitious people feel good about themselves when they get public recognition and plenty of money. In contrast, caring people feel good about themselves when they help others; creative people feel good when they can express what's in their imaginations; and

detail-oriented people feel good about doing a complex job carefully and well. High-paid, high-status careers like lawyer, business executive, doctor, politician, banker, real-estate investor, stock broker, movie actor, television newscaster, and advertising and public relations jobs can all satisfy a desire to impress others and make a lot of money. (Of course, people go into these fields for other reasons, too—and not everyone who tries these careers succeeds in getting rich.) Ambitious teens can get started on a career path by interviewing adults in their chosen field and by taking after-school jobs as clerks or cashiers or by volunteering at a local television or radio station.

ADVENTUROUS teens might love to travel or try new foods and fashions. They might enjoy planning an exchange between two schools across town (or perhaps across the world!). They might seek summer or volunteer jobs doing something entirely new to them, just to see what it's like or because it offers a chance to visit new places or meet new people. Fresh ideas and new situations stimulate them—they might even see a potentially dangerous situation as an exciting challenge. Good career fields include journalism, outdoor recreation and education, archeology, the travel industry, detective work, airplane piloting or stewarding, sales, museum curating, and firefighting.

FAIR-MINDED teens might get involved with an issue where they can make a difference, such as starting a recycling program, writing an exposé of unjust conditions for their school or community newspaper, or working to protect an endangered species. They might volunteer with Habitat for Humanity or another service program, get training as a peer mediator, become a literacy tutor, or intern at a politician's or district attorney's office. Injustice and inequality bother them; they believe in fairness and want to help make the world a better place. They might consider careers in ecology and conservation, social activism, law, industrial and labor relations, politics, not-for-profit businesses, diplomacy, education, criminal justice, and human services.

ACTIVITY 3A

Name: _____

Date: _____

Character Traits, Work, and You

Write a brief description of each character trait and list some jobs that might suit someone with this trait. (You may add an extra trait if you feel it is important.) Then mark any traits that you feel are part of your own character with an asterisk (*). Which of these jobs might interest you?

Caring _____

Detail-oriented _____

Creative _____

Ambitious _____

Adventurous _____

Fair _____

Other _____

Possible careers for me (from starred traits, above): _____

ACTIVITY 3B

Name: _____

Date: _____

Occupational Clusters

From *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, 2002–2003 Edition

Management, business, and financial operations occupations

Accountants and auditors
Administrative services and facility managers
Advertising, marketing, and public relations managers
Budget analysts
Claims adjusters, appraisers, examiners, and investigators
Computer and information systems managers
Construction managers
Cost estimators
Education administrators
Engineering and natural sciences managers
Farmers, ranchers, and agricultural managers
Financial analysts and personal financial advisors
Financial managers
Food service managers
Funeral directors
Human resources, training, and labor relations managers and specialists
Industrial production managers
Insurance underwriters
Loan counselors and officers
Lodging managers
Management analysts
Medical and health services managers
Property, real estate, and community association managers
Purchasing managers, buyers, and purchasing agents

Tax examiners, collectors, and revenue agents

Top executives

Professional and related occupations

Architects, surveyors, and cartographers

- Architects, except landscape and naval
- Landscape architects
- Surveyors, cartographers, photogrammetrists, and surveying technicians

Arts and design

- Artists and related workers
- Designers

Community and social services occupations

- Clergy
- Counselors
- Probation officers and correctional treatment specialists
- Protestant ministers
- Rabbis
- Roman Catholic priests
- Social and human service assistants
- Social workers

Computer and mathematical occupations

- Actuaries
- Computer programmers
- Computer software engineers
- Computer support specialists and system administrators

Drafters and engineering technicians

- Drafters
- Engineering technicians

Education, training, library, and museum occupations

- Archivists, curators, and museum technicians
- Instructional coordinators

- Librarians
- Library technicians
- Teacher assistants
- Teachers—adult literacy and remedial and self-enrichment education
- Teachers—postsecondary
- Teachers—preschool, kindergarten, elementary, middle, and secondary
- Teachers—special education

Engineers

- Aerospace engineers
- Agricultural engineers
- Biomedical engineers
- Chemical engineers
- Civil engineers
- Computer hardware engineers
- Electrical and electronics engineers, except computer
- Environmental engineers
- Industrial engineers, including health and safety
- Materials engineers
- Mechanical engineers
- Mining and geological engineers, including mining safety engineers
- Nuclear engineers
- Petroleum engineers

Entertainers and performers, sports and related occupations

- Actors, producers, and directors
- Athletes, coaches, umpires, and related workers
- Dancers and choreographers
- Musicians, singers, and related workers

Health diagnosing and treating occupations

- Chiropractors
- Dentists
- Dietitians and nutritionists
- Occupational therapists
- Optometrists
- Pharmacists
- Physical therapists
- Physician assistants
- Physicians and surgeons
- Podiatrists
- Recreational therapists
- Registered nurses
- Respiratory therapists

- Speech/language pathologists and audiologists
- Veterinarians

Health technologists and technicians

- Cardiovascular technologists and technicians
- Clinical laboratory technologists and technicians
- Dental hygienists
- Diagnostic medical sonographers

Legal

- Court reporters
- Judges, magistrates, and other judicial workers
- Lawyers
- Paralegals and legal assistants

Life scientists

- Agricultural and food scientists
- Biological and medical scientists
- Conservation scientists and foresters

Media and communications-related occupations

- Announcers
- Broadcast and sound engineering technicians and radio operators
- News analysts, reporters, and correspondents
- Photographers
- Public relations specialists
- Television, video, and motion-picture camera operators and editors
- Writers and editors

Physical scientists

- Atmospheric scientists
- Chemists and materials scientists
- Environmental scientists and geoscientists
- Physicists and astronomers

Science technicians

Social scientists and related occupations

- Economists and market and survey researchers
- Psychologists
- Social scientists, other
- Urban and regional planners

Service occupations

Building and grounds-clearing and maintenance occupations

- Building-cleaning workers
- Grounds maintenance workers
- Pest control workers

Food preparation and serving related occupations

- Chefs, cooks, and food preparation workers
- Food and beverage serving and related workers

Healthcare support occupations

- Dental assistants
- Medical assistants
- Medical transcriptionists
- Nursing, psychiatric, and home health aides

Personal care and service occupations

- Animal care and service workers
- Barbers, cosmetologists, and other personal appearance workers
- Childcare workers
- Flight attendants
- Gaming services occupations
- Personal and home care aides
- Recreation and fitness workers

Protective service occupations

- Correctional officers
- Firefighting occupations
- Police and detectives
- Private detectives and investigators
- Security guards and gaming surveillance officers

Sales and related occupations

Cashiers

Counter and rental clerks

Demonstrators, product promoters, and models

Insurance sales agents

Real estate brokers and sales agents

Retail salespersons

Sales engineers

Sales representatives, wholesale and manufacturing

Sales worker supervisors

Securities, commodities, and financial services sales agents

Travel agents

Office and administrative support occupations

Communications equipment operators

Computer operators

Data entry and information processing workers

Desktop publishers

Financial clerks

- Bill and account collectors
- Billing and posting clerks and machine operators
- Bookkeeping, accounting, and auditing clerks
- Gaming cage workers
- Payroll and timekeeping clerks
- Procurement clerks
- Tellers

Information and record clerks

- Brokerage clerks
- Credit authorizers, checkers, and clerks
- Customer service representatives
- File clerks
- Hotel, motel, and resort desk clerks
- Human resources assistants, except payroll and timekeeping
- Interviewers
- Library assistants, clerical
- Order clerks
- Receptionists and information clerks
- Reservation and transportation ticket agents and travel clerks

Material recording, scheduling, dispatching, and distributing occupations, except postal workers

- Cargo and freight agents
- Couriers and messengers
- Dispatchers
- Meter readers, utilities
- Production, planning, and expediting clerks
- Shipping, receiving, and traffic clerks
- Stock clerks and order fillers
- Weighers, measurers, checkers, and samplers, recordkeeping

Office clerks, general
Officer and administrative support worker
supervisors and managers
Postal Service workers
Secretaries and administrative assistants

Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations

Agricultural workers
Fishers and fishing vessel operators
Forest, conservation, and logging workers

Construction and related workers

Boilermakers
Brickmasons, blockmasons,
and stonemasons
Carpenters
Carpet, floor, and tile installers and finishers
Cement masons, concrete finishers,
segmental pavers, and terrazzo workers
Construction and building inspectors
Construction equipment operators
Construction laborers
Drywall installers, ceiling tile installers,
and tapers
Electricians
Elevator installers and repairers
Glaziers
Hazardous materials removal workers
Insulation workers
Painters and paperhangers
Pipelayers, plumbers, pipefitters,
and steamfitters
Plasterers and stucco masons
Roofers
Sheet metal workers
Structural and reinforcing iron and
metal workers

Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations

Electrical and electronic equipment
mechanics, installers, and repairers

- Computer, automated teller, and office machine repairers

- Electrical and electronics installers and repairers
- Electronic home entertainment equipment installers and repairers
- Radio and telecommunications equipment installers

Vehicle and mobile equipment mechanics, installers, and repairers

- Aircraft and avionics equipment mechanics and service technicians
- Automotive body and related repairers
- Automotive service technicians and mechanics
- Diesel service technicians and mechanics
- Heavy vehicle and mobile equipment service technicians and mechanics
- Small engine mechanics

Other installation, maintenance, and repair occupations

- Coin, vending, and amusement machine servicers and repairers
- Heating, air-conditioning, and refrigeration mechanics and installers
- Home appliance repairers
- Industrial machinery installation, repair, and maintenance workers
- Line installers and repairers
- Precision instrument and equipment repairers

Production occupations

Assemblers and fabricators

Food processing occupations

Metal workers and plastic workers

- Computer control programmers and operators
- Machine setters, operators, and tenders—metal and plastic
- Machinists
- Tool and die makers
- Welding, soldering, and brazing workers

Plant and system operators

- Power plant operators, distributors, and dispatchers
- Stationary engineers and boiler operators
- Water and liquid waste treatment plant and system operators

Printing occupations

- Bookbinders and bindery workers
- Prepress technicians and workers
- Printing machine operators

Textile, apparel, and furnishings occupations

Woodworkers

Other production occupations

- Dental laboratory technicians
- Inspectors, testers, sorters, samplers, and weighers
- Jewelers and precious stone and metal workers
- Ophthalmic laboratory technicians
- Painting and coating workers, except construction and maintenance
- Photographic process workers and processing machine operators
- Semiconductor processors

Transportation and material moving occupations

Air transportation occupations

- Aircraft pilots and flight engineers
- Air traffic controllers

Material moving occupations

Motor vehicle operators

- Bus drivers
- Taxi drivers and chauffeurs
- Truckdrivers and driver/sales workers

Rail transportation occupations

Water transportation occupations

Military Job Clusters

Enlisted occupational groups:

Administrative

- Clerks—finance, accounting, legal, maintenance, supply, transportation
- Planners and operation managers
- Recruiters
- Training specialists and instructors
- Personnel

Combat

- Artillery
- Infantry
- Special forces

Construction

- Building engineers
- Electricians, plumbers, and pipefitters
- Heavy equipment operators

Electronic and electrical equipment repair

- Avionics
- Communications
- Computer
- Optical
- Weapons systems

Engineering, science, and technical

- Emergency management
- Environmental health and safety
- Intelligence
- Space operations

Health care

- Diagnostic equipment operator
- Emergency medical treatment
- Laboratory test conductor
- Pharmacy supplies maintenance
- Patient records maintenance

Human services

- Caseworkers and counselors
- Religious program specialists

Machine operator and production

- Dental and optical laboratory technicians
- Engine, turbine, nuclear reactor, and water pump operators
- Industrial equipment and machinery operators
- Survival equipment specialists
- Welders and metal workers

Media and public affairs

- Film makers, audio recorders, and videographers
- Graphic artists
- Interpreters and translators
- News and music programmers
- Photographers

Service personnel

- Firefighters
- Food service personnel
- Law enforcement and security personnel
- Military police

Transportation and material handling

- Aircrew
- Cargo specialists
- Quartermasters and boat operators
- Vehicle drivers

Vehicle and machinery mechanics

- Aircraft mechanics
- Automotive and heavy equipment mechanics
- Marine engine mechanics
- Powerhouse mechanics

Officer occupational groups:

Combat specialty

- Artillery and missile system officers
- Infantry officers
- Military operations planners and directors
- Special-operations officers
- Tanks and other armored assault vehicle officers

Engineering, science, and technical

- Aerospace engineers
- Engineering officers
- Environment health and safety officers
- Space operations officer

Executive, administrative, and managerial

- Finance and accounting
- Health administration, international relations, and supply officers
- Health services administrators
- Purchasing and contracting managers

Health care

- Dentists
- Dietitians
- Optometrists
- Pharmacists
- Physical, speech, and occupational therapists
- Physician assistants, registered nurses
- Physicians and surgeons
- Psychologists

Human services

- Chaplains
- Social workers

Media and public affairs

- Military band leaders
- Producers and directors of motion pictures, videotapes, and television and radio broadcasts
- Public information officers

Transportation

- Navigators
- Pilots
- Ship engineers
- Ships and submarines officers