

## Lesson Title: Know Your Postsecondary Options

### Learning Targets: *I can...*

- identify and distinguish between common types of postsecondary options
- utilize a “purpose first” approach when exploring postsecondary options in order to pursue pathways that align with my interests, goals, and needs (financial and any other)
- enhance my awareness of the personal, technical and transferable skills that will be highly valued in today’s and tomorrow’s economies

### Key Vocabulary and Resources

#### *Common Types of Postsecondary Options*

1. **Gap Year/Other Bridge Program:** A semester or year of experiential learning, typically taken after high school and prior to career or postsecondary education, in order to deepen one’s practical, professional, and personal awareness. A few examples include [City Year](#) and [AmeriCorps](#).
2. **Apprenticeship Program:** Combines hands-on work (income) with classroom instruction (learning) in the aspects of a skilled profession. Click [here](#) for more information.
3. **Paid/Unpaid Internship:** A professional learning experience that offers meaningful, practical work related to a student's field of study or career interest. Click here for a list of local internships: [One Degree](#)
4. **Credentialing:** An industry-recognized credential is a verification of an individual's qualification or competence. Industry-recognized credentials are valued in the labor market and are a validation of knowledge and skill. They can take many forms, including certifications, certificates, and licenses, and are often connected to regional labor market trends.
5. **Job Training or Non-degree Granting Certification Program:** Programs aimed at opening the door to entry-level employment pathways and/or giving a boost to workers' employability and earnings. See [One Degree](#) for training programs in New York City, [Many Pathways, One Goal](#) (a comprehensive database of career/skills training programs in New York City), [Alternatives to College: Comprehensive Youth Development](#). CUNY offers a wide range of [certificate programs](#).
6. **Workforce Development Program:** Programs that provide employment and technical skills training [linked here](#).
7. **Employment:** A paid work agreement between an employer and employee. Read about different employment industries [HERE](#).
8. **College:** Enrollment in two or four-year accredited degree granting programs. Learn about the different types of colleges at [Learning to Use Big Future](#)
9. **Independent Living Skills Program:** Supports for young people with developmental disabilities: life-skills training/support coupled with job coaching. [Transition Support and Options Resources](#)
10. **Military:** Enlistment in one of the five military service branches- (Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, or Coast Guard) [Military Information](#) and the [ASVAB test](#)

### Mini Lesson/Framing for Independent Work

When it comes to planning for postsecondary success, it's important for you to know the full range of options available to you and to develop strategies for how to vet *what is and isn't* a strong match for you based on your interests, abilities, short, and long term needs.

#### STEP 1: "Reflection 3, 2, 1"

***Read through the categories of postsecondary options listed above. Use the links in each description to learn more about each option. Then, complete the "Reflection 3, 2, 1" below.***

One of the categories of postsecondary options that most interests me is \_\_\_\_\_

**Now reflect and write down...**

***3 reasons you selected this option...***

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***2 questions you have about this option...***

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***1 word to describe how you feel about the future...***

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### Independent Work, including Checks for Understanding of the Learning Targets

Knowing what you like, what you are good at, what you need now, and what you want in the future are all really important things to consider when thinking about your postsecondary options. Use the table below to record your thoughts about these key areas of planning for your future.

**STEP 2: About Me**

***My Interests***  
*(likes/hobbies/passions...)*

***My Abilities***  
*(skills/strengths/talents...)*

***My Immediate Needs***  
*(bills/obligations/commitments...)*

***My Long Term Goals***  
*(hopes/intentions/desires...)*

***Does the postsecondary option you selected in Step 1 seem like a good fit/match for the interests, abilities, needs, and goals you just identified? Why/why not?***

If your interests, abilities, needs, and goals seem like a good fit for the option you selected, that's great! It's also great if none or some of your interests, abilities, needs, and goals seem like a good fit/match. The truth is...most young adults remain unsure of what they want to do for quite some time, and those who continue to explore options and to acquire skills ultimately wind up with the best fit/match possible. The suggested activities that follow will help you learn more about yourself and your postsecondary options.

### STEP 3: Learning More About My Options

The following activities can help further your understanding of yourself and your postsecondary options. You can revisit these activities from time to time as your planning and thinking about the future changes.

- Complete at least one interest inventory like [Exploring Your Career Interests](#)
- Take [virtual tours of college campuses and company headquarters](#) to learn more about specific options that match your interests and goals.
- Interview adults you interact with at school or in the community about their postsecondary pathways. Some sample questions you can ask are:
  - What were you doing at my age?
  - What do you do now?
  - How did you decide what postsecondary path to follow?
  - What things should I think about when I'm choosing my own postsecondary path?
  - How did you view your future at my age? How do you view it now?
  - What advice would you give to somebody my age?
  - How would you describe your schooling experience?
  - What was the best job you ever had and why?

### Exit Ticket

Complete the following self-assessment and [share it with your counselor](#) so together you can identify the best next steps toward securing your future!

**Please circle the response under each statement that best reflects your feelings.**

**1. I have a clear understanding of the different postsecondary options that are available to me.**

Strongly Agree    Agree    Unsure/Don't Know    Disagree    Strongly Disagree

**2. I can identify postsecondary pathway options that match with my interests, skills, needs, and goals.**

Strongly Agree    Agree    Unsure/Don't Know    Disagree    Strongly Disagree

**3. My interest/curiosity in postsecondary options was sparked by this activity.**

Strongly Agree    Agree    Unsure/Don't Know    Disagree    Strongly Disagree