

The best questions to ask a student about their future career are open-ended and focus on their interests, skills, and values, rather than a single job title. This approach helps them think more deeply about their future and opens up a wider range of possibilities.

The best starting question

Instead of the traditional "What do you want to be when you grow up?", a more effective and less-pressured starting point is:

"What kind of life do you want to build for yourself?".

This question shifts the focus from a specific job title to the broader aspects of their future, such as:

- The type of environment they want to work in (e.g., indoors, outdoors, alone, or with a team).
- Their desired work-life balance and lifestyle.
- How they want to make an impact on the world.

Follow-up questions to prompt deeper reflection

After starting the conversation, you can use these questions to help a student connect their present interests to their future aspirations.

Exploring passions and interests

- "What activities make you lose track of time?".
- "What subjects or topics could you talk about for hours?".
- "If you were guaranteed success, what would you do for a year?".

Discovering skills and strengths

- "What problems do you enjoy solving?" (e.g., logical, technical, or social).
- "What do people ask for your help with?"
- "What are you naturally good at, and what skills do you want to develop further?"

Connecting work to values

- "What do you care deeply about or want to change in the world?"
- "What does 'success' look like to you?" (e.g., income, impact, or freedom).
- "What things do you value in a workplace environment or culture?"

Imagining possibilities

- "If you could have any job for just one day, what would it be and why?"
- "Are there any jobs you've seen or heard of that interest you? What do you find appealing about them?"
- "Imagine it's 10 years from now. What are you most proud of accomplishing?"