

## Self Expertise & Skills

Career is often the overlooked component of “college and *career*,” but it is vitally important in exposure to options that exist and how to best plan for the career pathways that are a best fit for you. It is important during the first step to be the expert of **KNOWING YOURSELF** and finding out “what matters to you” and how you will show this throughout your life. Your exploration is a combination of YOUR:

- **Interests:** What do you like to do and think about?
- **Skills/Aptitudes:** What are you good at? Which activities come naturally to you or do you pick up easily?
- **Personality:** What makes you, YOU. Where do you get your energy, how do you think...make decisions, behave and move within the world?
- **Values:** Which values do you hold most deeply?
- **Learning style:** How do you prefer to absorb, process, comprehend and retain information?

Often students get, “stuck,” trying to determine their major or career of interest. This process is so much more than that step! Many students think that you have to know definitively what you want to major in, or what you want to do for the rest of your life, in order to progress in planning which is so far from the truth - many, many students have no idea. And that’s perfectly fine. Most people are still figuring it out. It is entirely normal to be unsure about these things, but it is not OK for students to ignore questions about their interests or what they might like to study. Beginning with assessments can be a valuable and meaningful option, as can exploring guided pathways which can streamline a student’s journey through college by providing structured choice, revamped support, and clear learning outcomes—ultimately helping more students achieve their college completion goals.

The New World of Work is a fast-paced environment, very different from previous generations. Take some time to explore your options and get familiar with the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills needed to be successful in any career field as success in the new economy is as much about acquiring the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for in demand occupations as it is to be well educated. Keep in mind that your time spent on investigating different opportunities will provide you with valuable information in terms of the types of jobs you might be interested in, as well as helping you decide which ones are not right for you.

**Start Here** → Review these resources

- [Career Exploration Infographic - Understand Each Step](#)
- **Watch** Career Introduction Webinars
  - [So What's Your Reason For Being Career Path & Major](#)
  - [4 Skills & Steps To A Successful Career](#)
  - [Success in the New Economy](#)
- **Explore** CTE [Guided Pathways](#)
  - [Guided Pathways with our partners at Saddleback College](#)
- **Explore** Careers
  - [Bigfuture.collegeboard.org/explore-careers](http://Bigfuture.collegeboard.org/explore-careers)
  - [Careercafe.com](http://Careercafe.com)
  - [Career Coach](#): Discover majors and in-demand career and education based on interests
  - [Careercruising.com](#): Interactive career guide featuring multimedia interviews + profiles
  - [RoadTrip Nation](#): Explore who you are and what you want to do with your life

**Take An Assessment** → Assessments are a valuable tool in career development. Listed below are free resources that can be used for students in grades 8-12. FYI: As a student’s interests and goals become more mature, Futureology also offers an online self-paced program grouping assessments into meaningful connections for students grouped by 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> grades:

- [Career Guidance Self Paced Program](#) *(Recommended for Juniors/Seniors)*
- [Map Your Future! Career Exploration](#) *(Recommended for Freshmen/Sophomores)*
- [ASVAB](#)
- [Values Assessment](#)
- [Interest Assessment \(RIASEC\)](#)
  - [College Coach](#)
  - [CAcareerzone.org: Interest Profiler](#)
  - [O\\*NET Interest Profiler](#)
- [Learning Styles Assessment](#)
- Skills Assessments
  - [CareerOneStop's Skills Matcher](#): Rate levels on 40 key workplace skills + match careers
  - [CAcareerzone.org: Skills Profiler](#)
- [Personality Assessment](#)
  - [16personalities](#): Learn which one of 16 personality types like “Mediator,” “Commander” and “Defender.” Takes less than 12 minutes.
  - [Big 5 Personality Test](#) or [Big Five](#): divides people into five personality traits: openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. Helps you identify learning styles as well as work preferences.

**Start Activity Planning** → Do an inventory to begin to assess how you spend your time and where you should invest more time:

- [Activity & Experience List Builder](#)

**Inventory Your Skills** → Be more successful with learning about the skills you need for a job, internship, apprenticeship or applying to college:

- [The New World of Work & Job Skills](#)
- [21st Century Skills](#)
- **Resume Resources**
  - [Crafting an Effective Resume](#) Webinar
- **Interviews**
  - [Informational Interviews](#) - Learning about an Industry or Career Field
  - **Watch** the [Interviewing 101 Webinar](#)
- **Internships** - *check out these sites for more info*
  - [Guide to Internships | Summer](#)
  - [Experience](#): by major and location, connection to colleges and universities
  - [Idealist.org](#): 57,000 nonprofit and community organizations in over 180 countries
  - [Internmatch.com](#): specializes in internships, and entry level jobs up to two years after graduation
  - [Internships.com](#): over 300,000 jobs and internships at over 145,000 organizations; student oriented and enables students to identify opportunities related to their college majors
  - [Internshipprograms.com](#): 2800+ programs and 200,000 positions
  - [Internships4You.com](#): partners with colleges, universities, and small businesses
  - [Learn4Good](#): internships by major
- **Volunteering** - *check out these sites for more info*
  - [Junior Achievement](#)
  - [Oneoc.org](#)
  - [Volunteermatch.org](#)

## FAQ's

### *Why should my child explore careers?*

- Active participation in career exploration activities will help your child become aware of the many career opportunities available and the steps that need to be taken to reach his or her career goals. Some advantages of career exploration include:
- Exposing your child to careers he or she may have never considered
- Discovering the various types of post-high school education and training, as well as their costs, so your child does not waste time and money getting training unrelated to his or her chosen career
- Understanding the work environments of interesting careers

### *Why is it important to get an early start?*

- It's important to get an early start on career awareness because this awareness can:
  - Increase your child's interest in school
  - Show your child that what she/he is doing in school now is the key to achieving their own future goals
  - Connect what she/he is learning in school to real-world situations
  - Imagine himself or herself in an occupation
  - Develop skills such as working and playing with others, making decisions, solving problems, and being a leader—these are important work readiness skills

### *Why is my help as a parent important to my student's success?*

- Research shows that parents and guardians have the greatest influence on their children's career choices.
  - As a parent, you know your child better than anyone else
  - You, more than anyone else, have the most interest in helping your child choose a rewarding career
  - You know your child's future is too important to be left to luck or chance

### *How do I help my child choose a career path?*

- The first step in choosing a career path is to identify your child's interests (+ passions and strengths). Research shows your child will be more successful and more satisfied with his or her career choice if that choice is based on his or her interests. Their interests point the way to the best possible career path. While your child is in middle and high school, he or she can participate in many career exploration activities such as: informational interviewing, career fairs, job shadowing experiences, internships and work-based learning, volunteer work, Career Technical Education (CTE) classes, and field trips.

### *Do I have to pick a major before I apply to college?*

- Although college is still a time to explore, the majority of colleges will require that you select a major as a part of the admission process. Choosing a major gives you direction and intent. Still many students apply "undecided" and are accepted at amazing colleges.

### *Why can't I just pick an easy major to get in to?*

- College costs are high. Choosing a major that you don't want but think might be, "easier," to be accepted too typically has no guarantees you will be able to switch to something you DO want. We highly recommend you choose a major relevant to what you would like to do as a career pathway. College costs are also high, changing your major multiple times can delay your graduation and

### *What's the difference between a career and a major?*

- A major and a college degree are closely linked, though they are not the same thing. A career is a person's occupation; one's profession which can change over time. Typically individuals transition several times in their career to new titles, or companies. A major is simply a "major area of focus" for your college studies. All students are required to complete about 40 college classes to earn a bachelor's degree. Of those 40 classes, your college major will be about 12 classes. Universities want to make sure that you receive a broad education that includes history, government, composition, natural sciences, ethics, and so on. These requirements are called "General

Education” requirements. Typically, you spend your first two years in college completing these General Education requirements. **Here’s a simple formula, your bachelor’s degree is comprised of the following:**

General Education requirements + Your College Major (Area of Focus) + Electives = Bachelor’s degree in Your Area of Focus.