

Lesson 1: Working Hard for the Money

TOPIC: Career Options

OVERVIEW:

As teens and young adults begin working for the first time, questions about job choices and what to do after high school are on the forefront of their minds. With some teens planning on attending college and others unsure of their direction after graduation, this lesson explores the many different options young adults and teens have at their disposal in finding a **career** track that works for them. Exploring **jobs** that combine passion and profit, students examine different career and educational tracks and assess where they fit within the spectrum of choices, and recognize how **taxes** relate to income earned.

Time: 55 min

Subject Connections:

- English Language Arts
- Math
- Science
- Social Studies
- Technology

Supplies:

- Projector (for teacher presentation slides)
- Access to the Internet (optional)

Preparation:

- Make copies of student handout
- Set up projector with presentation slides

Glossary with key vocabulary 16

OBJECTIVES:

1. Identify career options and education or training required for different careers
2. Name sources of income
3. Explain the relationship between income and taxes
4. Demonstrate how to research and analyze different careers

INDIVIDUAL HANDOUTS:

- Exploring Careers
- Career Research
- Making Choices

GROUP HANDOUTS:

- none

TEACHER PRESENTATION SLIDES:

- Dream Job
- Possible Employer Benefits
- Paycheck
- Choices

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

- How do I earn money now?
- How can I earn money later in my life?
- What career or job is right for me?
- What kind of education or training will I need?

ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES:

Pre-Assessment:

- **Slide:** Dream Job
- **Activity:** Exploring Careers

Post-Assessment:

- **Handout:** Career Research*
- **Handout:** Making Choices*

*Money Smart Portfolio Handouts

Instruction Steps

WARM UP Exploring Careers

10 MINUTES

Dream job

1. What are your interests? What excites you?
2. What are you good at? What skills do you have?
3. What do you want to do after high school or college?
4. What is your dream job, and why?
5. What skills do you think are required for your dream job?
6. How do you think you could get the skills needed for your dream job?

Money Smart for Young People Grades 9 – 12

Open the lesson by displaying the **Dream Job** slide. The question prompts may be used for small- group discussions, a whole-class discussion, or an individual reflective writing exercise.

Distribute the **Exploring Careers** handout, and review together as a class.

Using student responses from the **Dream Job** slide and information on the **Exploring Careers** handout, engage the class in a brief discussion about how different career tracks require different preparation, such as formal education, training, skills, and experience.

Ask students:

- *What is the difference between a job, career, and profession?*
- *Why do different jobs require different education and training?*

Invite students to share examples of each to test their understanding.

GUIDED EXPLORATION Income, Benefits, and Taxes

15 MINUTES

Possible Employer Benefits

Health Insurance: helps cover employee medical costs related to illness or injury
Flexible Spending Accounts: tax-free money set aside by an employee often to be used for out-of-pocket medical expenses
Retirement Accounts:

- 401(k): an employer-sponsored plan to accumulate retirement savings that gives employees a choice of investment options, typically mutual funds. Employees who participate in a traditional 401(k) plan have a portion of their pre-tax salary invested directly in the option or options they choose.
- 403(b): exclusively for employees of public schools and certain tax-exempt organizations to accumulate retirement savings

Life Insurance: provides money to a beneficiary after the death of the insured
Extras: child care, relocation expenses, tuition reimbursement, transportation, wellness programs, discounts on products/services

Money Smart for Young People Grades 9 – 12

Next, guide the discussion to the different income levels for the jobs highlighted on the **Exploring Careers** handout. Explain that, even though a job may pay a certain amount of money per hour or year, there are other factors that impact earned incomes, such as benefits provided by an employer and taxes deducted from a paycheck.

Display the **Possible Employer Benefits** slide and review each of the benefits together as a whole class. Help students understand that, in addition to researching and exploring salary incomes, it is also important to investigate benefits provided by an employer.

For instance, if a job doesn't offer health insurance, explain that this is an out-of-pocket expense that must be considered in a personal budget, thus reducing available income to satisfy other needs.

Grade-Level Modifications:

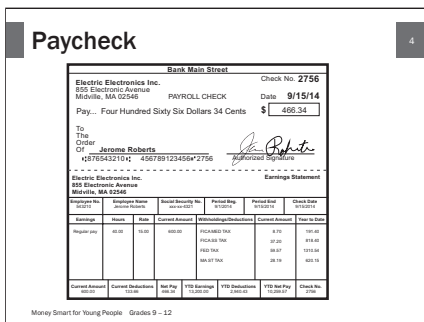
Beginner: Engage students in considering what a “benefit” means and why benefits are used to attract and retain employees.

Advanced: Challenge students to research and discuss real job listings, noting the types of benefits offered. They can use job-listing sites, social media platforms such as LinkedIn, or visit the websites of companies they are interested in working for.

MONEY SMART TIP!

While many people connect employer benefits first to health care and retirement, show students that there are also other benefits and perks that employers may offer. These could include items such as a wellness program covering gym membership costs, childcare and tuition reimbursements, discounts on products and services, unlimited vacation days, or flexible work hours.

Ask students to consider their values by having them define which benefits would be most important to them and why. Encourage students to also ask their parents and family members what type of benefits they have at their jobs and which ones they value the most.



Explain that another factor that impacts earned income is the amount of taxes deducted from a paycheck. Display the **Paycheck slide** and review the sample paycheck with the class. Walk students through each part of the paycheck and explain that, even though our gross income (earned money before taxes) is one number, our net income (take-home pay) can be quite different. (See Lesson 6 for more information on taxes.)

MONEY SMART TIP!

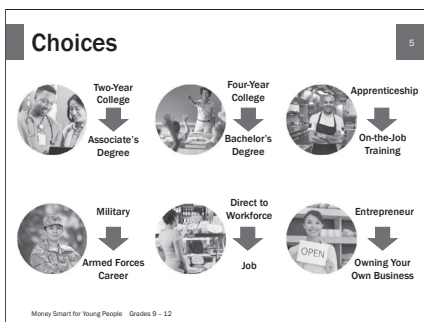
Expand the discussion of paychecks by connecting this lesson with Lesson 6, **Bread-and-Butter**, which details information on paychecks and taxes.

INDEPENDENT EXPLORATION
Education and Career Choices

20 MINUTES

Note: These activities are more independent than the Guided Exploration activities and may be used as homework assignments, collaborative group work, or independent study.

Display the **Choices slide** and engage the class in a brief discussion about the many different opportunities and choices available in selecting a career path.



Ask students:

- *Why are there so many different career options?*
- *How do you determine which option is right for you?*

Explain that directions after high school may include going straight into the workforce, attending a two- or four-year college, obtaining an apprenticeship, joining a branch of the military, or becoming an entrepreneur. Emphasize that there is no one “right” path and that everyone has unique values, goals, passions, dreams, and skills.

Distribute the **Career Research** handout and explain that students will now have the opportunity to explore different career options by researching job functions, training, and income levels.

Allow students time to complete the handout, and invite volunteers to share their responses.

MONEY SMART TIP!

The **Career Research** handout may also be assigned as homework to provide students additional research time, or used as a writing extension by having students write a brief essay responding to the interest and skills reflection questions.

WRAP UP **Making Choices**

10 MINUTES

Close the lesson by giving students time to reflect on their different career choices by completing the **Making Choices** handout.

Extended Exploration

Note: Use the following ideas to extend financial literacy concepts throughout the school year within core content areas through English Language Arts, Math, Social Studies and Economics, and Technology activities, projects, and discussions. Duration of activities will vary.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Writing Prompts:

How does technology influence the global job market?

For example: *In what ways do advancements in automation and robotics impact available work?*

How does technology change the way we search for jobs and perform jobs? (Online job applications, remote working opportunities)

What does the “American Dream” mean to you?

How does a job or career fit into your idea of the “American Dream”?

Create an argument for and against the following statement:
Not everyone needs a four-year degree.

Suggested Readings:

Why It's Important to Think About Your Career in High School by U.S. News: Explore reasons why it is never too early to start thinking about your career.

<http://money.usnews.com/money/blogs/outside-voices-careers/2014/02/11/why-its-important-to-think-about-your-career-in-high-school>

Colleges Ramp Up Career Guidance for Students by USA Today: Learn about how colleges are helping students find the greatest return on their college investment through career planning.

www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2014/02/26/campus-career-centers-take-center-stage/5257141/

MATHEMATICS

Activity/Project Ideas:

Review and discuss job requirements, education, and annual incomes for different applied math-based careers, such as actuaries, statisticians, financial analysts, and computer scientists.

Challenge students to calculate federal, state, Medicare, and Social Security taxes on different income levels and paycheck scenarios.

SOCIAL STUDIES AND ECONOMICS

Discussion Topics:

Explore and discuss the globalization of the job market.

For example: *Is globalization an opportunity to strengthen the U.S. economy? Why or why not? What are the pros and cons of globalization?*

Have students analyze connections between genders and careers — What are the historical shifts in jobs held by men and women?

Debate the domestic and international economic impact of outsourcing jobs and the supply and demand shifts of different industries.

Activity/Project Ideas:

Have students conduct research about the history of jobs. For example: students may explore historical shifts in the U.S. job market by visiting the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics website at www.bls.gov/home.htm. Investigate how jobs in America have evolved over time from farming to manufacturing to technological advancements. Have students create a timeline to present their research and discuss as a class how jobs will continue to evolve in the future. Invite students to consider science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) careers and the demand for such skilled careers in the present and future.

TECHNOLOGY

Online Resources:

Occupational Outlook Handbook by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics: Explore hundreds of different careers and discover education and training needed for each career, as well as median salaries.

www.bls.gov/ooh

Career One Stop by the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration: A comprehensive website showcases employment trends, occupation profiles, and salary information for every type of career.

www.careeronestop.org/

Career Videos by Career One Stop: Career videos organized into 16 clusters, or related types of work, that include job tasks, work environment, education requirements, and more.

www.careeronestop.org/Videos/CareerVideos/career-videos.aspx

Youth Employment: Explore resources ranging from job search assistance to internships.

<https://youth.gov/youth-topics/youth-employment>

Classroom activities from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB)

The CFPB has developed a set of classroom activities to help teachers develop and support the building blocks of financial capability in their students. Each activity is designed to be completed within a single class period and includes a teacher guide and supporting student material. Some specific activities that are relevant to this lesson include:

Creating a poster on life after high school

Students create a poster or infographic illustrating post-secondary education or workforce options that are available to them.

www.consumerfinance.gov/practitioner-resources/youth-financial-education/teach/activities/creating-poster-life-after-high-school/

Answer Key

Student Handout 1:

Career Research.

Answers will vary. Use handout to assess student ability to evaluate research and compare the purpose of each job, education required, and projected income.

Student Handout 12:

Making Choices.

Answers will vary. Use handout to assess student ability to understand that different training and education paths can lead to different career choices.



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EXPLORING CAREERS

Job: work a person performs regularly in order to earn money

Career: a job or profession that a person holds for a long period of time

Profession: a type of job that requires special education, training, or skill

Job	Description	Training/Education	Average Income
Chemical Engineer	Chemical engineers combine knowledge of science and math to develop and design chemical manufacturing processes. Chemical engineers can work in a variety of areas to help facilitate manufacturing, from pharmaceuticals to food and environmental safety.	Bachelor's degree in chemical engineering	\$102,160 per year or \$49.12 per hour
Social Media Marketing Manager	A social media marketing manager plans social media campaigns to generate interest in products or services. Social media managers are responsible for overseeing a company's online presence, customer engagement, and online brand identity.	Bachelor's degree in marketing, advertising, or journalism	\$132,230* per year or \$63.50 per hour
Dental Hygienist	Dental hygienists clean teeth and help patients maintain oral health. Hygienists examine patients, take dental X-rays, and help to educate patients on good oral health.	Associate's degree in dental hygiene	\$74,070 per year or \$35.61 per hour
Registered Nurse	Nurses perform a variety of tasks to help care for patients. Nurses assess injuries and illnesses, create treatment plans for patients, and administer medicine, among other patient-care tasks.	Registered nurses are required to hold a nursing license, which is earned by graduating from a nursing program and passing a national exam. Nursing programs are available for both associate and bachelor degrees	\$70,000 per year or \$33.65 per hour
Masons	Using bricks and stones, masons build or repair a variety of structures, from walls, fences, and floors to fireplaces and chimneys.	A high school diploma or equivalent is required, and most masons complete a three- to four-year apprenticeship in order to learn the trade.	\$42,900 per year or \$20.62 per hour
High School Teacher	High school teachers help prepare students for life after graduation by teaching academic lessons and skills required for students to enter the job market.	Teachers must have a bachelor's degree and a state-issued certification or license.	\$59,170 per year or \$29.59 per hour
Multimedia Animator	Multimedia animators create two- and three-dimensional models, animations, and visual effects for various forms of media, including television, movies, and video games.	Most animators need a bachelor's degree in computer graphics, art, or a related field.	\$70,530 per year or \$35.27 per hour

Find more information about these and other careers in the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* at www.bls.gov/ooh.

* Salaries for Social Media Marketing Managers vary based on location, company size, and previous experience.



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CAREER RESEARCH

Name: _____

Select two different careers that interest you, or that you would like to learn more about, and write them in the spaces below. Using the research resources or an Internet search engine, investigate the job description, training and education required, and the average income for each career.

Not sure which career to start with? Take a moment to reflect on your interests and skills by answering the questions below or taking an interest survey to assess strengths and capabilities, such as <https://careertech.org/student-interest-survey> or www.careeronestop.org/Toolkit/Careers/interest-assessment.aspx.

- What do you like to do?
- What are you interested in?
- What excites you?
- What are you good at?
- What fields are you interested in learning more about?

Research Resources:

▪ Occupational Outlook Handbook.

www.bls.gov/ooh

▪ Career One Stop.

www.careeronestop.org

Check out the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' A to Z guide for more career ideas!

www.bls.gov/ooh/a-z-index.htm

Career	1.	2.
Description		
Training/ Education		
Average Income		



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MAKING CHOICES

Name: _____

Based on your current interests, select three different paths to employment from the following: two-year college, four-year college, apprenticeship, military, direct to workforce (job), and entrepreneur. Next, write down career opportunities that interest you that can be achieved by following each path.

