

A-287: Career Investigation Unit High School

UNIT OVERVIEW

This unit gives students the opportunity to choose a career and create a career path through informed decision-making. Students begin the unit exploring their own interests, values, and skills through individual writing, completing three self-assessment inventories, and participating in discussions. Students also investigate work they are interested in pursuing and compare the characteristics of their chosen career to their personal qualities, talents and skills. Students can then create a career action plan and a personal portfolio to utilize for future education goals and their job search.

UNIT GOAL

A student shall demonstrate understanding of a variety of career clusters, attributes (qualities or characteristics) and aptitudes (talents & skills) needed in particular types of occupations and careers, how attitudes and behaviors affect the climate of a workplace, how systems within a workplace affect or interact with systems in the community, and how systems affect an individual worker

UNIT ACTIVITIES

1. Personal Profile: Complete the Life Experience Reflection handout and discuss your results. Then take three self-assessment inventories and summarize the results in your career log or create a visual picture of your life and interests.
2. Focused Career Study: Select two careers and fill in matrix grid to compare job specifications and characteristics to one's personal qualities.
3. Career Action Plan and Review of Personal Portfolio: Brainstorm steps for your career action plan and design a program that meets your career goals.

UNIT MATERIALS

- Career Log for each student
- Life Experiences Reflection Sheet (1 copy per student)
- Job Characteristics & Personal Qualities Matrix (2 copies per student)
- Connections to community businesses, possible mentor names
- Sample portfolios, materials to create a career portfolio
- Resources: internet, field trips, career fairs, guest speakers, list at the end of this unit

UNIT EVALUATION

Grading Criteria—You can refer to feedback checklists after each lesson section and/or create your own rubric for clear and specific expectations.

A--Exceeds expectations of high standard work.

B--Meets the expectations of high standard work.

C--Work completed, but all or part of the student's work is below standard level.

D-- Work completed, but performance is substantially below standard quality level.

A-287: Career Investigation Lesson 1

High School

Lesson Goal: A student shall determine one's personal interests, qualities, talents and skills and then examine a variety of career fields and the personal characteristics, talents, and skills needed in particular types of occupations and careers.

Rational Objective: To complete three self-assessments and summarize one's life experiences and goals.

Experiential Objective: To reflect on one's personal life experiences and their implications for future career choices.

Products: Life Experience Reflection; Self-assessments; Attribute and Goal Summary.

Tasks/Activities:

1. Instruct students to write in their career log. Ask students to think about their personal interests, qualities, skills, and goals. You can utilize some/all of the following 12 career questions. Present one question at a time and allow adequate time for students to write or draw whatever comes to mind.
 - How do you spend your free time?
 - What activities do you most enjoy and find most fulfilling?
 - What are your favorite topics to talk about, subjects to learn about?
 - What values are most important in your life? (give examples of values)
 - What full or part-time jobs have experienced? (list and describe)
 - Have you had any volunteer experiences or work-site visits?
 - What have others (friends, family, teachers, etc) reported are your strengths?
 - What personal characteristics do you think are assets for your future?
 - What talents and/or skills do you have (or skills you want to learn)?
 - Think about adults in career settings, what do you admire them?
 - What contributions do you want to make in life? What do you want to do to improve the world?
2. Distribute the "Life Experience Reflection" handout and instruct students to record their experiences on the flower diagram (part I), then complete the sentence stems (part II). In their career log, have students describe possible connections to future career choices. Provide time for students to reflect on their writing/drawing.
3. In pairs or small groups students share their "Life Experience Reflection" handout, then bring all students together for a discussion. Select some of the personal reflection questions above as a starter. Then ask if anyone has any new insights about their interests, skills or career path.

4. Instruct students to complete a minimum of three **self-assessments**--an interest inventory, an **abilities assessment** to identify special skills/competence; and an **aptitude test** to identify talents and the capacity for developing different intelligences. Instructors can search the internet (Career Interest Inventory) to find out more about the following assessments or other comparable tools.

- Inventories to identify **interests**:
 - **COPS**-Career Occupational Preference System
 - **IDEAS**-Interest Determination Exploration and Assessment System
 - **CAI**-Career Assessment Inventory
 - **CDM**-Career Physical Education and Lifetime Fitness Systems
 - **SCII**-Strong Campbell Interest Inventory
- Examples of assessments to identify **abilities**:
 - **CDM**-Career Physical Education and Lifetime Fitness Systems
 - **SCII**-Strong Campbell Interest Inventory
 - **CAAPS**-Career Aptitude Ability Placement System
 - **PSAT**-Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test
 - **ASVAB**-Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery
- Example of assessments to identify **aptitudes**:
 - **COPES**-Career Orientation Placement and Evaluation Survey

5. Instruct students to create a summary of their personal qualities and interests based upon the findings from the “Life Experiences Guide” and the self-assessments. Ask students to look for and identify patterns or connections in their qualities, skills, interests and their future career goals.

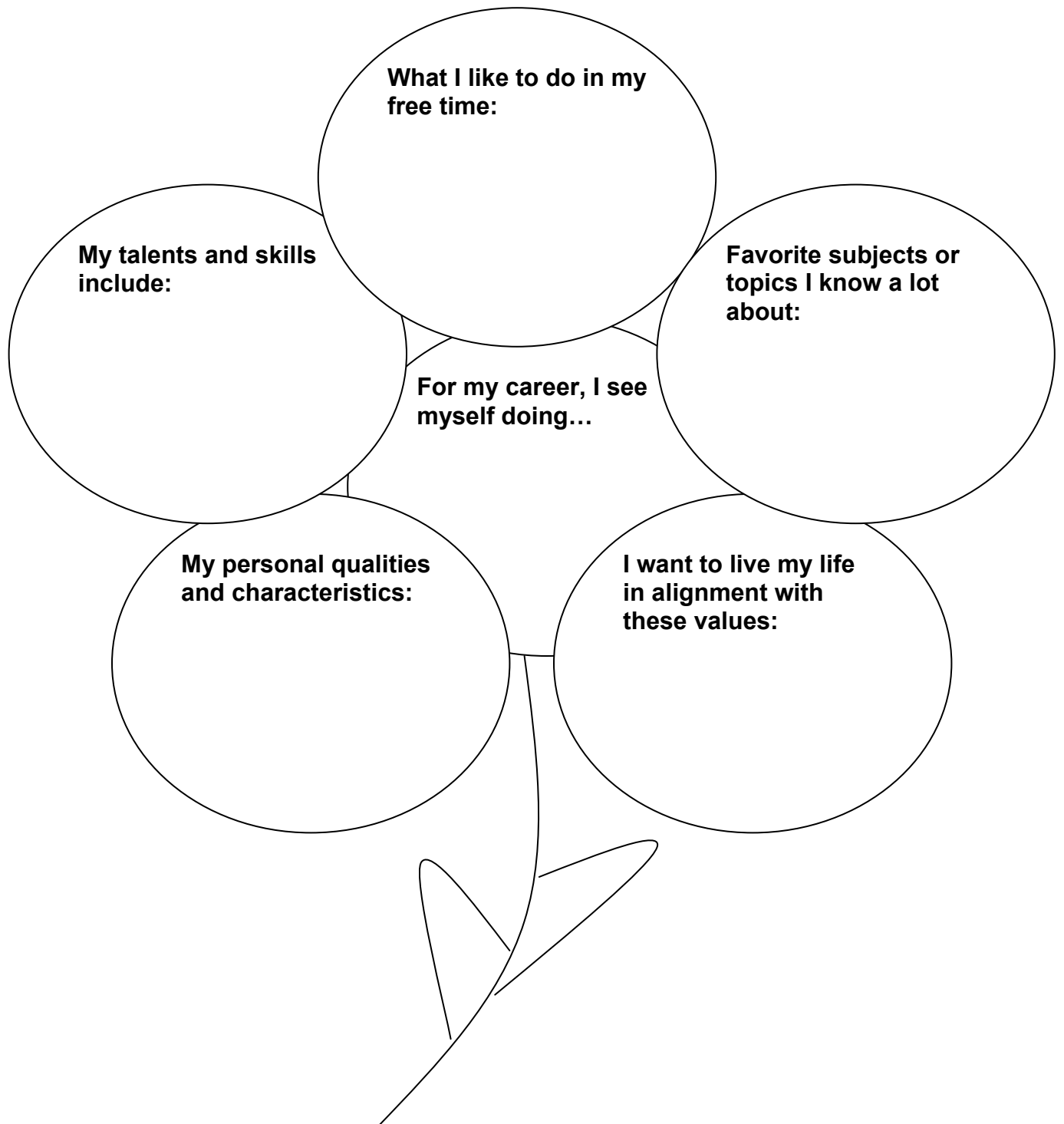
For a *visual summary*, instruct students to utilize the flower diagram that contains their values, interests, personal qualities and skills. Students can use a highlighter pen to mark those items that occur more than once or those that have special meaning. Encourage students to draw lines, use arrows, star or circle items to help make sense of the results. Students can also draw their own visual journey.

For a *written summary*, ask students to discuss preliminary ideas about their future career goals based upon these patterns. They can include specific examples from the “Life Experiences Guide” and the self-assessments to support preliminary decisions.

6. Facilitate a class discussion, when students have completed their summaries to help students think about their results and the next steps to reach their goals. Before starting to work towards their career goals, students also need to consider:
- Financial resources for education and training
 - Grades in school, work habits
 - Experience in a career-related area
 - Interests, abilities, aptitudes and values

LIFE EXPERIENCE REFLECTION Part I

Place the key information that surfaced during your individual writing on this flower diagram. What patterns or connections do you see? Use a highlighter/colors to mark the information that seems recurrent or the information that has special meaning for you. Draw lines, use arrows, star or circle key items.



LIFE EXPERIENCE REFLECTION Part II

Directions: Your life experiences—all you have done, been interested in, learned, experienced with family and friends, tried, liked and disliked—have an impact on what you might do for your life work. Complete these sentence stems and reflect on the experiences you have had. Include comments on how your experiences can contribute to your future work.

My Life Experiences

Implications for Career Choices

Since I was young, I like to spend my time...

As an adult, I want to be able to...

My friends and family think I'm good at...

My abilities as perceived by others mean I could work in...

(Describe job situations that might take advantage of each of the abilities others see. For example, if you like to sell your ideas, you might seek a career in which you influence others.)

People I admire whom I have personally observed practicing their profession:

The qualities that I see in people I might be interested in...

Work-sites I have visited:

My experience in work-sites mean that I would (not) like to work in...

Volunteer or work experiences I have had:

Skills I have used that I might use in future work...

A-287: Career Investigation Lesson 1
High School

FEEDBACK CHECKLIST FOR LESSON 1

The purpose of the checklist is to provide feedback to the student about his/her work.

Y= Yes

N= Needs Improvement

Student:

Teacher:

_____ **Life Experiences Reflection:** Life experiences are clearly described and their relevance to potential career choice(s) is/are fully explained related to personal characteristics, interests, talents and skills. _____

_____ **Self-Assessments:** Personal interests, talents and skills are appropriately identified. _____

_____ **Summary of Personal Characteristics and Goals:** Personal interests, talents and skills are clearly described. _____

_____ **Preliminary decisions on career choice(s)** clearly considers personal goals and abilities and are clearly supported with relevant examples and details. _____

Comments:

A-287: Career Investigation Lesson 2

High School

Lesson Goal: A student shall demonstrate understanding of a variety of career fields and the qualities, talents & skills needed in particular types of occupations and careers.

Rational Objective: To evaluate/compare career choices in relationship to life goals and personal qualities. To conduct an in-depth investigation on one selected career.

Experiential Objective: To explore career fields and compare each with one's personal profile. Select one career and arrange a site visit, a mentorship, or a work experience to add to one's research. To show excitement about a possible career choice.

Products: Career Log; Presentation

Tasks/Activities:

1. Students explore at least two different careers in at least two different career fields by gathering and recording information in their log. Instruct students to explore careers within two career fields that seem to correspond with their interests, skills and abilities. "Look for characteristics in careers that align with the personal qualities you determined in the previous task." (One of the careers should be one they identified in the previous task as a preliminary career goal).

Document a variety of resources for each career. Provide resources and instruct students to utilize the resources found in a high school career center or counseling office. Students may also include books, interviews, guest speakers, work-site visits, mentorship or internship resources, career fairs, Internet sources and employment brochures.

Research and record in student log:

- job duties
 - working conditions and working climate
 - personal qualities or characteristics that people need for this job
 - talents and skills needed to do the job
 - education and/or training required for the job
 - experiences that would help one get a job in this area
 - salary range for this job
2. Complete the Job Characteristics Matrix for two careers. Students will need two copies of the matrix, filling out one for each career. Instruct students to compare their personal qualities with the job specifications and characteristics to help them make a decision about which career to research in-depth. They need to match job

requirements with their personal information. Students need to look for patterns in each career that correspond to their interests, talents, skills, experiences and goals. Ask students to share their findings with a partner to check for completeness.

3. Choose one career to conduct in-depth research. In their log, students need to explain why they made their choice and support their decision with evidence from the matrices.
4. Plan and conduct an in-depth investigation using first-hand (i.e., interviews, e-mails, phone conversations etc.) and secondary sources. Students need to make notes in their log for documentation. If appropriate, student can arrange for job shadowing, an internship, mentorship and/or volunteering in a career-related environment. Student needs to create questions to gather information on:
 - how attitudes and behaviors affect the climate of the workplace
 - how systems within the workplace affect or interact with systems in the community
 - how systems affect an individual worker
5. Student present findings to you and, if possible, a mentor—an adult who can offer advice, support and feedback in regards to your career choice and research. This could be a parent, teacher, counselor, friend, or someone in the career field. . The presentation needs to include written documents in your career log: your self-reflection results and other information you have gathered.

Share with students: “Think about all of the adults you have encountered so far during your career investigation. Choose an adult who would be a good listener and who could give you feedback. Your presentation should include your sources of information, as well as the facts and findings. The presentation should show that you have a thorough understanding of the career choice and in what way the career aligns with your personal qualities and goals.”

JOB CHARACTERISTICS MATRIX MY PERSONAL QUALITIES & SKILLS

Directions: Use two copies of this matrix to compare:

- 1) findings from each of your two career field explorations, and
- 2) your personal qualities that you summarized in the Personal Profile Task.

Career _____ Career Field _____

Fill in the first horizontal column with the specific characteristics of your selected career. Then for each item about yourself (vertical list on left) either list your responses or write a few sentences reflecting on what you have to offer this job, what are your strengths?

Career	Career Duties	Personal Qualities	Skills Required	Training Needed	Working Conditions	Other Info
---------------	----------------------	---------------------------	------------------------	------------------------	---------------------------	-------------------

My
Personal
Attributes
(Qualities)

My
Interests

My
Aptitudes
(talents)

My
Abilities
(skills)

My
Experiences

My
Goals:

A-287: Career Investigation Lesson 2
High School

FEEDBACK CHECKLIST FOR LESSON 2

The purpose of the checklist is to provide feedback to the student about his/her work.

Y= Yes

N= Needs Improvement

Student:

Teacher:

In my Career Log:

_____ Career descriptions include accurate and complete information on job characteristics including duties, working conditions and workplace climate, qualities and talents needed and training required. _____

_____ Matrices illustrate the correlation between personal goals and qualities and preliminary career goals. _____

_____ Explanation of decision-making process shows in what way a decision was based on specific criteria from both personal qualities and job characteristics. Explanation includes detailed supporting information. _____

_____ Research notes reflect comprehensive investigation of job characteristics. _____

For my Presentation:

_____ Presentation includes thorough explanation of job characteristics and alignment of personal qualities and job characteristics. _____

_____ Presentation includes complete and accurate information related to personal characteristics and talents needed in the career, how attitudes and behaviors affect the climate of the workplace, how systems within the workplace affect or interact with systems in the community and how systems affect an individual worker. _____

Comments:

A-287: Career Investigation Lesson 3

High School

Lesson Goal: A student shall demonstrate understanding of a variety of career fields and the qualities, talents and skills needed in particular types of occupations and careers. A student will also understand how attitudes and behaviors affect the climate of a workplace, how systems within a workplace affect or interact with systems in the community, and how systems affect an individual worker

Rational Objective: To select a career and establish an explicit career action plan, including creating a educational plan that will help to meet a career or vocational goal.

Experiential Objective: To evaluate career choices in relationship to life goals and personal attributes. To create a visual representation of one's journey & vision and feel motivated to begin one's career action plan.

Products: Career Action Plan; Reflection Paper and Conference with teacher; Personal Portfolio

Instructions for Students:

A. CAREER PLAN (Give students the following instructions verbally or copy)

1. Prepare an educational plan to reach your selected career goal (based on your assessments and writings in prior lessons). Create or revise your program of study (courses at your high school) to reflect what would be necessary preparation. (If you are a senior, do this in relation to post-secondary training and education opportunities) As part of your career plan, use the form or format that your school uses (available in most high school guidance offices) in order to plan for your program of study. Include a copy of it in your portfolio, along with all other documents from the Personal Profile and Focused Career Study assessment tasks.
2. Brainstorm and list possible training and future educational options that match your goals and career choice. What schools have the training and courses you need? Your counselor's office or career center can help you with this. Identify at least three schools, agencies, organizations or businesses that offer the training you need for your selected career. Create a chart of information for each school, agency, institution or business so that you can compare them with your criteria, considering items such as: tuition, admissions requirements, application fees/deadlines, etc.
3. List the activities and experiences that will help you reach your career goal. Determine what other information or experiences you need or want in order to continue making good decisions about your future career area. Consider participating in job shadowing, interviews, mentorships, volunteering and internships.

B. REFLECTION PAPER & CONFERENCE

Create a reflection paper and have a reflection conference with your teacher, telling how you explored your personal qualities and how you investigated the career field. This reflection is where you to both analyze and synthesize the entire project.

- Review your matrix, your summary of career choice, your presentation and your career action plan.
- Reflect upon these documents and weigh all of your options.
- Determine whether your original vision can be accomplished with the career action plan you created.
- Describe your process, your findings, your criteria for decision-making and your decision.

C. COMPILE A PERSONAL PORTFOLIO

Examine sample portfolios provided by your teacher or locate samples through employment services. Note the contents and appearance of sample personal portfolios. Then put together your own portfolio:

- Be sure to include all of your products from your work in this unit (career interest, life goals, personal qualities and talents).
- Design a resume and include it at the beginning of your portfolio
- If you have thank you notes and/or letters of support, include these in the portfolio
- Include drawings, pictures and graphics to make your portfolio visually appealing
- Discuss your portfolio with your teacher and a partner or mentor. Ask for their suggestions or comments.

**A-287: Career Investigation Lesson 3
High School**

FEEDBACK CHECKLIST FOR LESSON 3

The purpose of the checklist is to provide feedback to the student about his/her work.

Y= Yes

N= Needs Improvement

Student:

Teacher:

Career Action Plan:

_____	Plan is developed through the use of explicit details and examples	_____
_____	Course selection is clearly compatible with the chosen career field	_____
_____	Course selection or future planning clearly incorporates the requirements for further training and education	_____
_____	Choices of post-secondary training and education corresponds with selected career clusters	_____

Reflection Paper or Conference:

_____	Reflection includes relevant examples and details for relating how personal talents were explored, method of investigating your career, description of your process & findings an explanation of your criteria for making decisions	_____
_____	Career choices are thoroughly evaluated in relationship to life goals and personal qualities.	_____

Personal Portfolio:

_____	There is a clear description of career choices, life goals and personal qualities, skills and talents.	_____
-------	--	-------

Comments:

A-287: Career Investigation Unit High School

Resources:

Students should use resources provided or suggested by their teacher. They may also use *Minnesota Careers* (published by the Minnesota Department of Economic Security) and the Minnesota Career Information System, an easy-to-use computerized system which is available free of charge at any of the state's technical colleges and many high schools. Students can also obtain information through the Internet, field trips, career fairs and guest speakers.

Recommended Books

Bolles, R. (2004). *What Color is Your Parachute?* Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press.

Solovic, S.W. (2001) *The Girls Guide to Power and Success*. New York, NY: American Management Association.

Tieger, P. & Barron-Tieger, B. (2001) *Do What You Are*. Boston-New York-London: Little Brown & Company.

Wendleton, K. (1996-2000) *Targeting the Job You Want*. Franklin Lakes, NJ: Career Press.

Websites for Career Exploration

www.careercruising.com

www.career-lifeskills.com

www.dwya.com

www.fiveOclockclub.com

www.pearsonassessments.com

www.psychometrics.com

Other Resources

The Career Interest Game: www.missouri.edu/~cppcwww/holland.shtml

Princeton Review Career Quiz: www.careerquizhome.cfm?menuID=o+careers=6

RHETI Test (related to the enneagram): <http://www.9types.com>

The Career Key: www.careerkey.org (click on "you" "us" or "others" to enter this site)

Psychological Testing Tools: <http://www.metadevelopment.com>