

WHAT TO PACK.

GETTING PREPARED FOR
YOUR CAREER JOURNEY



LIFE'S A JOURNEY,
BRING THE ESSENTIALS



Montana Department of
LABOR & INDUSTRY

WHAT TO PACK.

GETTING PREPARED FOR YOUR CAREER JOURNEY

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January 2014

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This publication was adapted from "Career Wonders" by Labor Market Information Center of the South Dakota Department of Labor.

Hard copies of this publication are available by request.

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Activities in this workbook can be enhanced by using the Montana Career Information System (MCIS). When you see this symbol:



it means additional information or tools are available on MCIS.

Log in to MCIS at www.careers.mt.gov

Ask your school counselor for the username and password for MCIS. When you log in, click on "Create Portfolio. Write your portfolio username and password here:

username: _____

password: _____

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE?



Don't you hate that question?

"I'm fourteen years old!" you want to shout, "How am I supposed to know? I don't even know what careers there are, so how am I supposed to choose one?"

So relax. This book isn't about choosing what you want to be when you grow up. In fact, it's probably better if you don't decide so early. This is a time to explore all the possibilities. Feel free to keep your options open. No pressure.

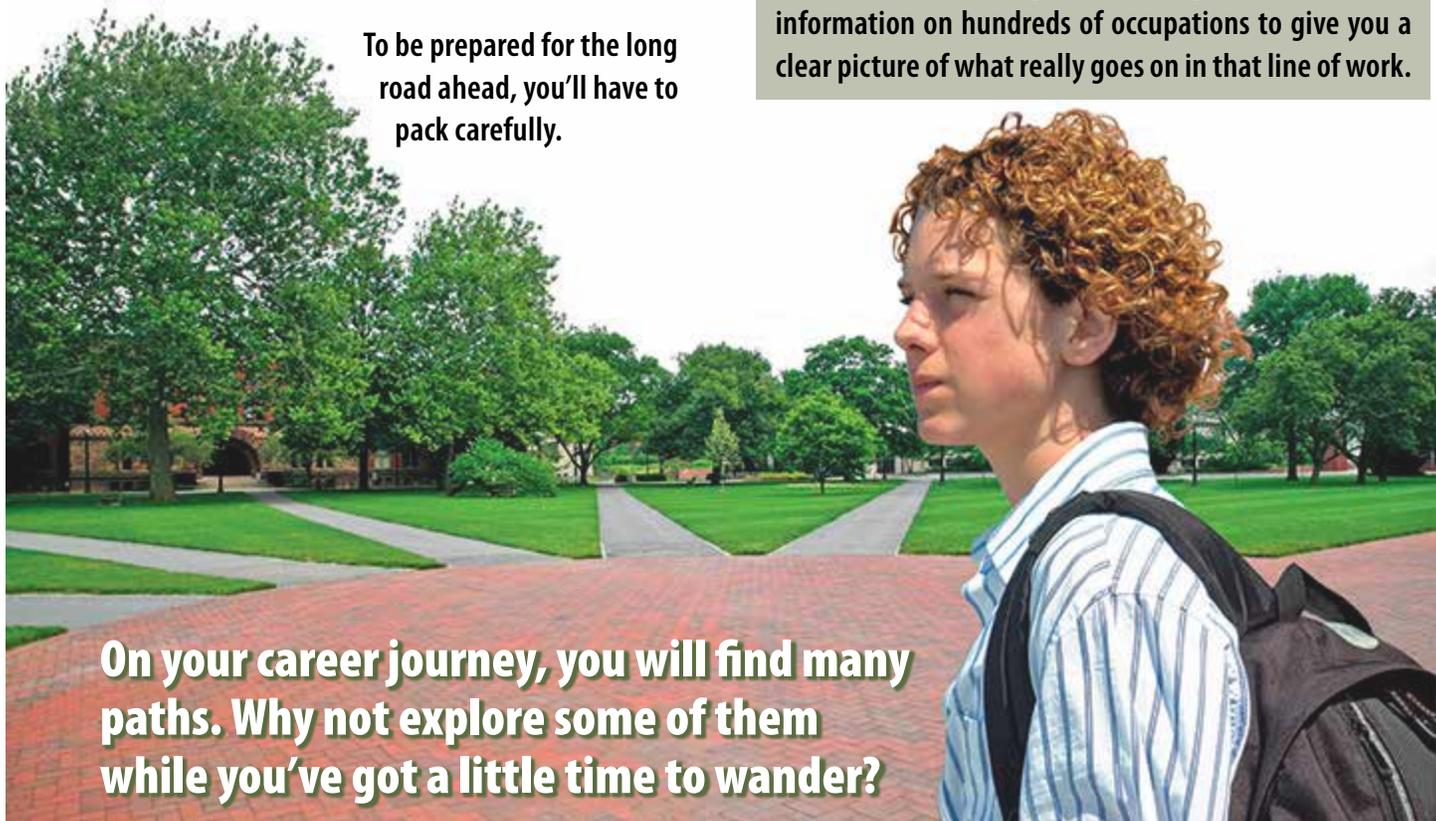
Your career journey will be a long one, lasting most of your life. Even after you've landed your first job, your journey will continue as you move up in your company, switch jobs, or pursue an entirely different career.

That's what this book is for: to serve as a guide to the journey you're about to take, and to make you aware of all the tools and skills you'll need to bring with you as you begin your journey.

You may not know much about all the different careers out there, but you know everything there is to know about yourself and your interests. This book can help you match your likes and dislikes to different career types, and show you how your personal interests relate to the world of work.

 One tool you'll definitely want to bring is MCIS. It gives you detailed information on hundreds of occupations to give you a clear picture of what really goes on in that line of work.

To be prepared for the long road ahead, you'll have to pack carefully.



On your career journey, you will find many paths. Why not explore some of them while you've got a little time to wander?

...BUT WHY START NOW?

No pressure, remember?

So try not to freak out when I say that now is the perfect time to start planning for the future.

“What’s the big rush?” you ask. “I’ve got 4 years of high school ahead of me, and possibly college after that. Isn’t that plenty of time to decide?”

Well, let’s start small then. Now is the perfect time to start planning for high school.

Do you know what courses are required for you to graduate? And what about all the different electives you can choose from? Will you take just the ones that sound fun, or the ones that look good on a college application?

Did you know that some colleges require four years of math, even if you only needed three to graduate from high school? The choices you make now can either open or close doors for you after graduation. Even if you’re certain you don’t want to go to college, will you feel the same way four years from now?

Everybody changes their mind sometimes. That’s perfectly natural. So leave yourself room to change your mind about your future. The more challenging classes you take in high school, the more options you’ll have after graduation. Keep all your doors open.

MONTANA UNIVERSITY SYSTEM ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS!

The Minimum Core is the bare minimum you’ll need to gain admission to 4-year programs within the Montana University System. The Rigorous Core is the “College Preparedness Track,” which prepares students to complete college-level coursework. Many out-of-state and private colleges adhere to these tougher admissions standards. Students must also complete the Rigorous Core to be eligible for Montana University System Honor Scholarships.

Subject	Minimum Core	Years	Rigorous Core	Years
Mathematics	Algebra I, II, and Geometry (or the sequential content equivalent).	3	Algebra I, II, and Geometry (or the sequential content equivalent) and a course beyond Algebra II (such as Trigonometry, Pre-Calculus, Calculus, Computer Math, or course equivalent)	4
English	Written and oral communication skills and literature	4	Written and oral communication skills, literature, and a designated college-prep composition or research-writing course	4
Science	2 lab sciences: one year must be earth science, biology, chemistry or physics	2	Full year each: General, physical or earth science; biology; chemistry or physics	3
Social Studies	Global studies (world history, world geography), American history, and government. Economics, American Indian history or other third-year course	3	Global studies (world history, world geography), American history, and government. Economics, American Indian history or other third-year course. Recommend: ½ yr of other courses such as psychology, humanities	3
Electives	World language, computer science, visual and performing arts, or vocational education	2	2 years of a second language, music, fine arts, speech/debate, career and technical education (such as information technology, computer science)	3
Math Proficiency Standards	ACT Math = 22 SAT Math = 520 AP Calculus AB or BC Subject Exam = 3 CLEP College Algebra-Trig, Calculus, or Trig = 50		Minimum Grades of C in each course of the High School Rigorous Core	

Please Note: Be sure to check your school district’s high school graduation requirements, which may include specific electives, such as a second language or arts credits.

WHY WORRY NOW ABOUT EDUCATION BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL?

Don't Worry. Plan.
(Then you won't have to worry.)

The world beyond high school might seem so distant to you that you'd just as soon worry about choosing the right nursing home. But it sneaks up on you.

If you put off planning for too long, you may find that some of your choices have been made for you (You didn't take any foreign language classes? You can cross several dozen colleges off your list of options).

Compared to those who don't, people who complete some sort of education or training after high school usually:

- Have a wider range of job possibilities and options.
- Get a better start in life.
- They learn to express themselves clearly, make informed decisions, and use technology--all useful skills on and off the job.
- Develop lifelong learning skills
- Are in a better position to help their families and communities.

But the most important reason to plan ahead is so you can have the *kind of life* you want.

IT'S A MATTER OF TIME...

One of the biggest reasons to plan for a career you'll enjoy is time.

The average American works until the age of 62. Suppose you start working full-time when you're 20. If you're like most people, how many years will you work? 1)

Let's look at working time from another angle, the percentage of time spent working. First, figure out how many total hours are in a week. 2)

The average person needs 8 hours of sleep per night. Subtract the average weekly hours spent sleeping from the total in the previous step. 3)

To make ends meet, most people need to work a full-time job (or two or more part-time jobs). Full-time is usually defined as working 40 or more hours a week. Assuming 40 hours as average, subtract those hours from the remaining (non-sleeping) hours in a week. 4)

What percentage of your non-sleeping time will you spend on the job each week? 5)

Wouldn't you rather spend all that time on the job doing work that you enjoy rather than getting stuck with a job you dislike just so you can pay the bills?

But wait, there's more! The work you do also tends to influence many other parts of your life:

- The people you socialize with
- The amount of time you have for family and friends
- Where you live
- Your leisure activities and hobbies

In other words, your career will be a HUGE part of who you are!

Answers: 1) 42 years 2) 168 hours 3) 168-56=112 hours 4) 112-40=72 hours 5) 36%

MONEY TALKS



IT'S ALL ABOUT ME.

How much money will you need to make to afford the kind of lifestyle you want? Complete the budgeting exercise on the next few pages to find out.

The more education you get, the higher your earning potential. Education can take you from a minimum wage job to a career with better pay, better working conditions, good benefits, and opportunities to move up in the company. Check out the table to the right to see the difference a little education makes.

“Wait”, you say, “Money isn’t everything.” And it’s not. Most of us don’t aspire to be filthy rich. We just want to earn enough to live comfortably. We don’t need a McMansion; we just want a house big enough for our families, to afford food, to maintain a car that runs, and enough money left over to pursue our hobbies, plus a little extra to sock away for a vacation every few years. That’s not asking too much, is it?

Unfortunately, with a minimum wage job, it is.

The difference between the money you can earn with a high school diploma vs. a Master’s Degree isn’t a choice of living a normal life vs. living in the lap of luxury. Rather, it can be the difference between living comfortably vs. living paycheck to paycheck.

Who wants to feel financially trapped in a life they hate, but can’t change because they can’t afford to take time off and look for a better job? Sure, money can’t buy happiness, but not having enough money can certainly make for an unhappy life.

Why consider college?

Check the numbers:

MT Median Annual Wages by Education

High School Dropout	\$16,199
High School Diploma	\$23,607
Some College/Associate (2 yr.) Degree	\$25,599
Bachelor’s Degree (4 years)	\$34,048
Graduate/Professional Degree (6+ years)	\$44,243

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2009

Unemployment Rates by Education

High School Dropout	15.6%
High School Diploma	7.3%
Some College/Associate (2 year) Degree	6.2%
Bachelor’s Degree or higher	3.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey 2009

FREE College Credits!

If you’ve ever checked out the price of college, then you understand why your parents are so stressed out. Do the folks and yourself a favor by checking into the “Dual Enrollment” programs that may be available through your school:

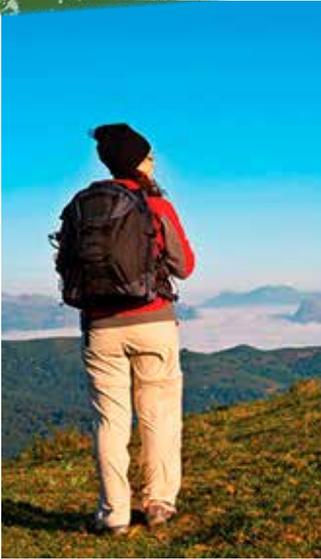
Several **Dual Enrollment** options are available to Montana high school students. A **dual-credit course** awards both high school credit and college credit, while a **college-credit-only course** awards college credit, but not high school credit.

Both dual-credit courses and college-credit-only courses can be delivered in the high school, at the college, online, through interactive video, at alternative sites, and at

times beyond the “traditional” school day and year – including summer, evenings, and weekends. The program can save students an estimated \$360 in tuition per class.

The **Running Start Program** allows students to simultaneously earn high school and college credits by taking classes at their local community college. This program isn’t free, but courses are available at a discount of up to fifty percent for tuition.

BUDGETING WORKSHEET: HOW MUCH MONEY WILL YOU NEED TO MAKE IT ON YOUR OWN?



You've seen how much more you can earn with a little post-high school education, but what do those numbers mean? Will \$21,938 a year cover your basic living expenses? Will you be able to afford season passes to your favorite ski resort on an annual salary of \$31,447? Here's your chance to find out how far your paycheck will go.

Estimate your monthly expenses for each of the items listed. Be realistic. Use the most accurate information you can get. Living expenses vary a lot from place to place, so think about what area you want to live in.

The figures we've provided are rough estimates. Check with your parents, teachers, or counselor about costs and adjust accordingly.

FIGURE YOUR MONTHLY BUDGET

MCIS You can estimate your monthly expenses online using Reality Check in MCIS at www.careers.mt.gov. Reality Check helps you estimate your monthly living expenses so you can see how much money you'll need to live on your own.



Step One: Estimate Your Expenses

1. Rent or House Payment - You need somewhere to live, and you have two basic options: buy a home, or rent one.

If you plan to rent:

Look up monthly rental prices in the newspaper. Look for an apartment or house that fits the lifestyle you want. Planning to have a family? Make sure you've got enough bedrooms.

You'll also need to protect yourself with renters insurance. After you determine the type of property you want to rent, contact an insurance agent in the area for prices on renters insurance. You can often get a discount if you use the same company for car insurance, so ask about a multiple policy discount.

Monthly rent:

Renter's insurance:

If you plan to buy:

Look up real estate prices for the area where you want to live. Mortgage payments will vary, but for a rough estimate, figure \$60 for every \$10,000 the house costs.

Homeowner's insurance is not optional. You are required by law to have it if you own a home. Contact a local insurance agent, or ask your parents, teachers, or counselor for an estimate. The same goes for real estate taxes. A realtor in your area should be able to tell you what the local taxes are.

Mortgage:

Real Estate Taxes:

Homeowner's Insurance:

2. Utilities

Whether you rent or buy your home, nearly everyone must pay for their own electricity and heat. For a small apartment, figure about \$90 for an average month. For a small house, plan about \$150.

If you plan to rent, you may or may not have to pay for the water. Homeowners will definitely pay for water. Contact the utility company in the area where you want to live for rates.

As for garbage and sewer services, it will depend on where you live. For instance, many cities provide garbage and sewer as free services for homes within city limits. Landlords may or may not pay garbage and sewer if you rent. Ask some adults what they pay for these services.

Electric/Gas Bill:

Water Bill:

Garbage Bill:

Sewer Bill:

3. School Loans

Unless you can get enough in scholarship money, or have parents willing to pay for your education, you may need to borrow money for college or trade school. Plan on a minimum payment of \$70 for student loans.

Monthly school loan payment:

4. Vehicle Costs

If you live in the middle of a city, close to where you work and shop, you might not have to worry about a vehicle. If you live most anywhere else in Montana, plan on several expenses.

Unless you get a car as a graduation present, you'll probably need an auto loan. Figure \$20 for every \$1,000 the vehicle costs.

Like home ownership, vehicle ownership legally requires that you buy insurance. Contact a local insurer for price estimates. Keep in mind that the newer and more expensive your car is, the more you will have to pay to insure it. The same goes for the cost of licensing your car.

Contact your local licensing office or ask an adult what they pay (they'll likely give you the annual price, so make sure to divide it by 12 for the monthly cost).

Vehicles often require repairs and maintenance. The newer your vehicle, the less likely it will need frequent repairs. But if you drive a beater, it could be in the shop every few months. Ask some adults you know how much they spend on repairs in a year, then come up with an average cost for repairs (again, remember to divide by 12 for the monthly cost).

Finally, you're going to need gas. Since you never know what the price of gas is going to do, you'll have to use current prices to estimate the cost. The average passenger car in the U.S. uses 541 gallons of fuel per year, while the average light truck uses 813 gallons. Use these figures to calculate your monthly fuel expenses.

Auto loan payments:

Insurance:

Licensing:

Maintenance:

Gas:

5. Fixed Expenses

Fixed expenses are those that do not vary greatly in cost from one month to another. Ask your parents, teachers, or counselor for help estimating the expenses for the items listed below.

Cable/Satellite TV:

Telephone/Cell phone service:

Internet service:

Food:

Health Insurance:



6. Other Expenses

The little things add up quickly. You'll need to buy household items such as dish soap, laundry detergent, toothpaste, shampoo, soap, deodorant, etc. Ask some adults how much they budget per month for these types of items.

Miscellaneous Household Items:

Clothing:

Entertainment:

7. Savings

Having enough money to cover all your expenses is crucial, but it is equally important to save money for unexpected expenses, and for your future. Ideally, you should try to save at least 10% of your paycheck. However, not everyone can do this. For the purposes of this exercise, socking away \$100 a month is a decent start.

8. Dependents

What kind of future do you envision for yourself? Will you be married? Are you hoping to raise children? What about pets? With a spouse, you'll have the potential to double your income; but if you have kids, double-income means the additional expense of daycare. Children also need food, clothes, school supplies, health insurance, etc. Pets can also be a drain on your pocketbook. Pet food, vaccinations, vet bills, and other related expenses need to be figured into the monthly budget. Ask your parents how much it costs to take care of you. Then apologize.

Childcare expenses (per child):

Pet expenses:

Now add up all your monthly expenses.

Total Monthly Expenses =



Step Two: Apply Income Taxes

Income Taxes and Social Security are automatically withheld from your paycheck. These expenses account for a minimum of 25% of your gross (pre-tax) income. That means that the number you came up with in Step One represents only your take-home pay, which accounts for the other 75% of your paycheck. To figure your gross monthly pay, divide your Total Monthly Expenses by 75% (0.75).

Gross Monthly Pay =

Multiply the above number by 12 to determine the annual wage you will need to afford the lifestyle you want.

Gross Annual Pay =

Note: The estimated 25% withheld includes only the standard deductions required by law. Many employers make additional payroll deductions for benefits such as health insurance, savings, and retirement plans. The costs depend on the options you choose. For example, the cost for health insurance will likely be higher if you choose to cover family members.

Step Three: See What Kind of Jobs Will Support Your Lifestyle



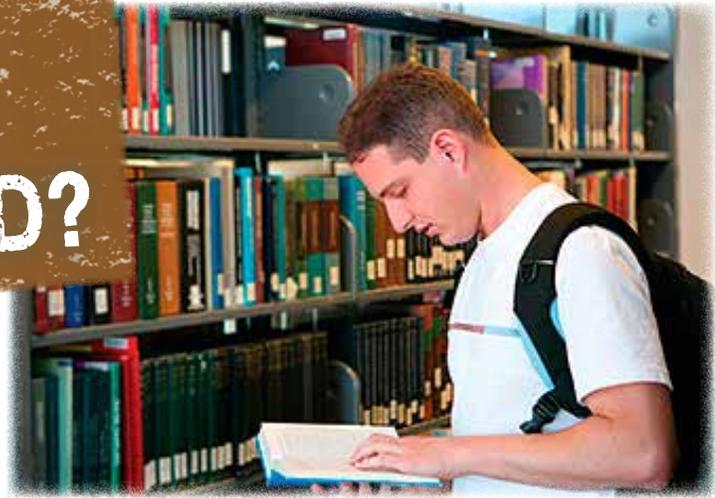
Use MCIS to explore occupations. For each occupation, MCIS lists the average wages for the U.S., Montana, and specific regions within Montana.

Using MCIS, find the average wages in several of the occupations you are most interested in. For each one, ask yourself, "Will this occupation support my lifestyle?"

"Wait!" you say, "Does this mean I shouldn't pursue my dream of becoming a social worker?" Not at all. Doing work that suits you is what's most important, but it's also important to know what you might have to sacrifice to do what you love. Maybe you'll have to go without cable TV, take an additional weekend job, or live close enough to work so you can bike or walk there. If you really want a certain job, you'll find a way to make it work.

HOW MUCH EDUCATION WILL YOU NEED?

Do you know how much education is typically required for these careers? Test your knowledge.



1. Physical Therapists

- a. On-the-job training
- b. Associate degree
- c. Bachelor's degree
- d. Master's degree

2. School Principals

- a. On-the-job training
- b. Associate degree
- c. Bachelor's degree
- d. Master's degree

3. Computer Programmers

- a. On-the-job training
- b. Associate degree
- c. Bachelor's degree
- d. Master's degree

4. Engineers

- a. On-the-job training
- b. Associate degree
- c. Bachelor's degree
- d. Master's degree

5. Paralegals

- a. On-the-job training
- b. Associate degree
- c. Bachelor's degree
- d. Master's degree

6. Floral Designers

- a. On-the-job training
- b. Associate degree
- c. Bachelor's degree
- d. Master's degree

7. Broadcasters

- a. On-the-job training
- b. Associate degree
- c. Bachelor's degree
- d. Master's degree

8. Telemarketers

- a. On-the-job training
- b. Associate degree
- c. Bachelor's degree
- d. Master's degree

9. Dental Hygienists

- a. On-the-job training
- b. Associate degree
- c. Bachelor's degree
- d. Master's degree

10. Wildlife Conservation Officers

- a. On-the-job training
- b. Associate degree
- c. Bachelor's degree
- d. Master's degree

11. Desktop Publishers

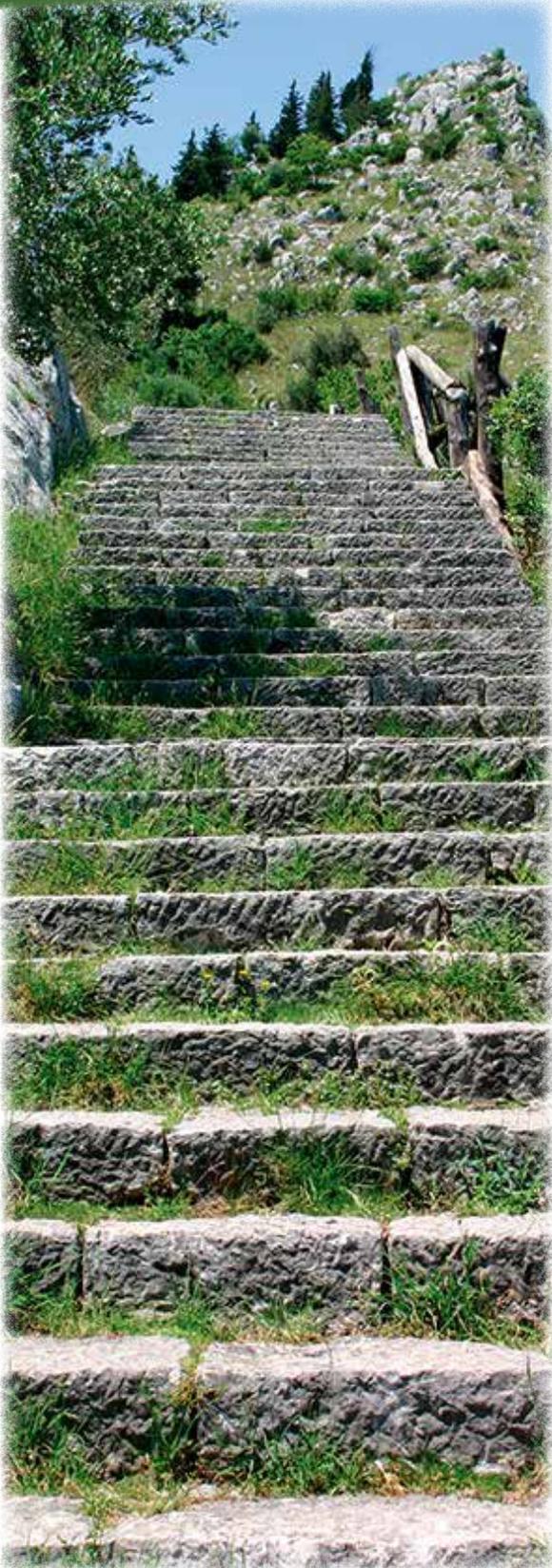
- a. On-the-job training
- b. Associate degree
- c. Bachelor's degree
- d. Master's degree

12. Janitors and Cleaners

- a. On-the-job training
- b. Associate degree
- c. Bachelor's degree
- d. Master's degree

Answers: 1. d 2. d 3. c 4. c 5. b 6. b 7. c 8. a 9. b 10. c 11. b 12. a

STEPS TO YOUR FUTURE



Small, well-planned steps today are giant steps toward a great future.

1. Explore who you really are.

If you want a job you'll be happy with, find one that fits your personality and interests. What do you like to do? What are your favorite classes? How do you spend your free time? Give some real thought to the subject, then try taking some career interest surveys (like the one on pages 13-20 or on MCIS at www.careers.mt.gov). They will help you match your interests to specific occupations.

2. Learn more about careers of interest.

What a disaster it would be to spend years of education and training to get a job that isn't what you thought it would be. So learn as much as you can about the actual work performed in the occupations that interest you. A good place to start is online with MCIS.



MCIS features descriptions of over 600 occupations, including details on work environment, tasks performed, wages, education required, training programs, and more.

Eventually, you'll want to narrow your choices to a group of related careers that seem to fit you best. Then find people in careers you're interested in and talk to them about their jobs. Many professionals will be happy make time for an informational interview with a student. Also check into job shadowing, where you spend time on the job with someone in a field you're interested in. Can't think of anyone working in jobs that interest you? Ask your parents, teachers, counselors, neighbors, and business leaders for suggestions.

3. Start planning (and put it down in writing).

Find out what training is required to get into the occupation you want, then figure out which high school courses you'll need to take. Fill out the High School Course Plan on pages 26-27.

People are usually more committed to achieving their goals if they write them down. So keep records as you take each of the above steps. MCIS provides a career portfolio for you to do this. Your career interests and goals may change over time, and that's okay. Change your plan as often as you need to. The key is to have a plan you can refer to along the way.

Remember, your school counselor and teachers can help you find answers to many of your questions about careers and how to prepare for them. And don't forget to ask your parents' advice. You might be surprised—they're not nearly as dumb as they look.

STEP 1: EXPLORE WHO YOU REALLY ARE

No one knows you better than you...

...But maybe you've never thought about your values, interests, and personality in terms of how they will fit into the world of work. If you want to be happy with your career, you'll need a job that fits all these aspects of you. So the first step in career planning is to explore the person you are.

Know your likes and dislikes. Recognize what you are good at, and what you are not so good at. What things are most important to you? Pay attention to the way you feel about everything you experience. All these things will help you figure out the kind of work you might enjoy someday. The following checklists will give you a start.

What do you value most?

From the list below, think about what things are most important to you. Which ones make you feel best? Which ones would you be most upset not to have?

Prioritize the 6 or 7 you value most by writing "1" in the blank in front of the thing that is most important to you, a "2" for the thing that is next most important, and so on. You don't have to limit yourself to the list provided. Feel free to add your own.

- _acceptance
- _possessions
- _security
- _status
- _people
- _challenge
- _creativity
- _independence
- _power
- _family
- _other (specify)
- _other (specify)

WHAT ARE YOUR COMFORT ZONES?

When you begin exploring careers, it is important to learn about working conditions of those careers. Think about how well they would fit you. For example, if you don't like to sit still for very long, you probably wouldn't be very satisfied in a career that involves working mainly at a desk.

Write an "L" in the blank beside those working environments you think you would like. Write "D" in the blanks beside those you think you'd dislike. As you learn more about careers in step two, keep your preferred "comfort zones" in mind.

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| Outside Work | Extended Travel |
| Inside Work | Repeating Tasks |
| Quiet Environment | Variety of Tasks |
| Noisy Environment | Working with People |
| Rotating Shift Work | Working with Things |
| Regular Hours | Working with Data |
| Weekend Work | Working with Ideas |
| Physical Work | Risk-Taking Work |
| Non-Physical Work | Safe, Predictable Work |
| Overnight Travel | |



BE SURE TO CHECK OUT MCIS. YOU'LL FIND ONLINE INTEREST AND SKILLS ASSESSMENTS TO HELP YOU NARROW YOUR LIST OF POSSIBLE OCCUPATIONS.

CHOOSING A CAREER TO FIT YOUR INTERESTS AND PERSONALITY

More Questions to Consider:

What do you enjoy?

Think about how you spend your free time. It could be helping children, playing sports, cooking, doing paperwork, reading, or anything else.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What are your aptitudes?

What are you naturally good at, either physically or mentally? It could be getting along well with other people, quickly grasping how to do math problems, or being able to carry a perfect musical pitch. If you can't think of what your natural abilities are, ask a relative, a teacher, or one of your friends to help you.

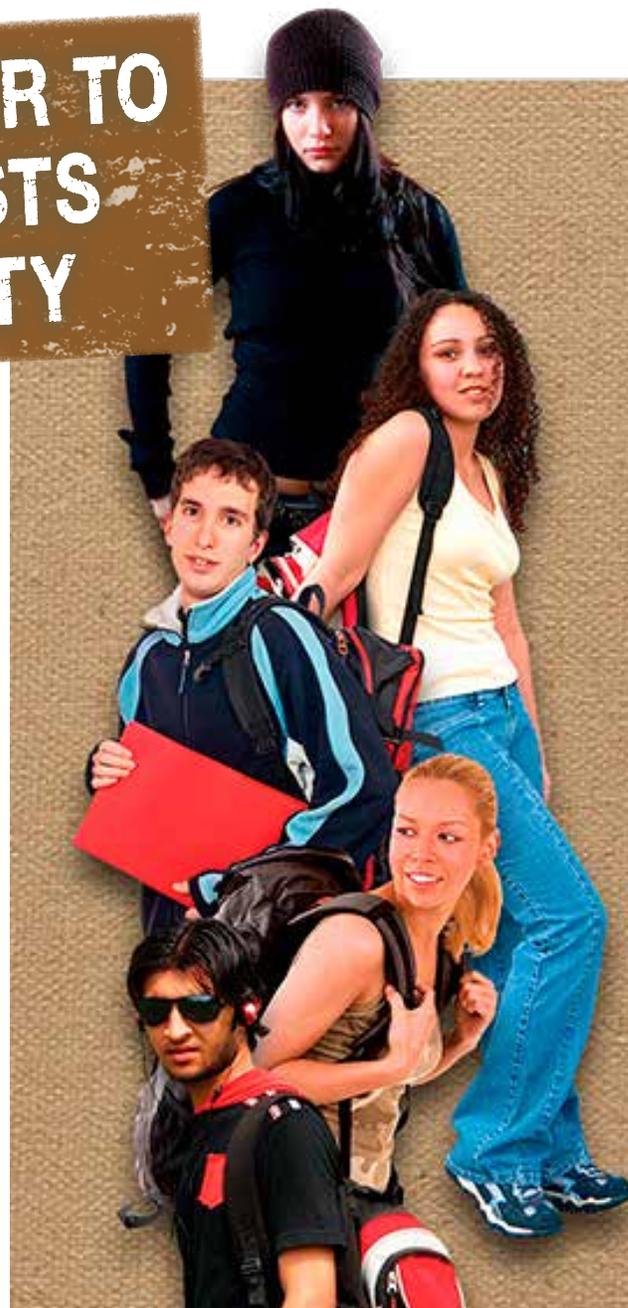
- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What are your skills?

Skills are slightly different than aptitudes. While your aptitudes are your natural abilities or talents, your skills are the abilities you have gained through training and practice.

Your skills could be drawing, giving a speech, or organizing a school function. Again, if you can't think of anything, ask someone who knows you well for help.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



If you're like most people, you'll be happier in a career that matches your interests and personality. You will feel more comfortable and perform better on the job. On the next 6 pages, you'll find descriptions of the major career interest groups, along with interest assessment questions, and sample lists of occupations within those groups. On the interest assessment portions, check those items that apply to you, then see which groups have the most check marks.

Interest groups are "RIASEC" types, with RIASEC standing for Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional. The highest three codes comprise the interest group to help identify career interests in that area. Complete the following pages to identify your interest areas or complete the IDEAS interest inventory online using MCIS.

ARTISTIC

Artistic people are often creators. They like to make things using their imagination. They prefer to deal with ideas more than objects. Artistic careers usually involve creating original pieces. Tasks in artistic careers can often be done without following a clear set of rules.



Are you?...

- Creative
- Independent
- Impulsive (acting quickly without too much forethought)
- Complicated
- Imaginative
- Intuitive (making decisions based on “gut feeling”)
- Courageous
- Original
- Introspective (thinking over your own ideas and feelings)
- Emotional
- Sensitive
- Idealistic (working for perfection, sometimes forgetting practical things)
- Expressive
- Open to new ideas

Do you like to?...

- Sketch, draw, or paint
- Attend concerts, theaters, or art exhibitions
- Read fiction, plays, or poetry
- Work on crafts
- Take photographs
- Write stories
- Sing, dance, or act

Do your hobbies include?...

- Sewing
- Performing
- Desktop publishing
- Creating web pages
- Taking dance lessons

Occupation Examples	Interest Groups	Big Sky Pathway
Architects	ARI	Industrial, Manufacturing, and Engineering Systems
Librarians	ACI	Human Services and Resources
Commercial and Industrial Designers	ARE	Arts and Communications
Graphic Designers	AER	Arts and Communications
Interior Designers	AER	Arts and Communications
Merchandise Displayers and Window Trimmers	ARE	Business, Management, and Information Systems
Musicians and Singers	AES	Arts and Communications
News Analysts, Reporters, and Correspondents	AI	Arts and Communications
Editors	AES	Arts and Communications
Photographers	ARE	Arts and Communications

CONVENTIONAL

Conventional people are often called organizers. They like to collect and organize things. They are most comfortable when they have a clear set of rules or steps to follow. They often like working with numbers. Conventional occupations frequently involve working with data and details more than with ideas. Usually there is a clear line of authority to follow.



Are you?...

- Organized Efficient
- Structured Thrifty
- Accurate Obedient
- Practical Methodical (following a set plan)
- Orderly Conforming (following the rules)
- Polite Conscientious (feeling obliged to do your best work)
- Persistent

Do you like to?...

- Work with numbers
- Type
- Be responsible for details
- Collect or organize things
- Follow defined procedures
- Use computers and related equipment

Do your hobbies include?...

- Collecting related objects (stamps, coins, cards)
- Playing computer or card games
- Keeping club or family records and files



Occupation Examples	Interest Groups	Big Sky Pathway
Claims adjusters, Examiners, and Investigators	CES	Business, Management, and Information Systems
Accountants and Auditors	CEI	Business, Management, and Information Systems
Computer Support Specialists	CIR	Business, Management, and Information Systems
Medical Records Technicians	CRE	Health Sciences
Cashiers	CER	Business, Management, and Information Systems
Counter and Rental Clerks	CER	Business, Management, and Information Systems
Bill and Account Collectors	CES	Business, Management, and Information Systems
Billing and Posting Clerks	CRE	Business, Management, and Information Systems
Bookkeeping and Accounting Clerks	CEI	Business, Management, and Information Systems
Tellers	CER	Business, Management, and Information Systems

ENTERPRISING

Enterprising people are often called persuaders. They like to convince others to do things. Enterprising occupations frequently involve starting and carrying out projects. These occupations can involve leading people and making many decisions. Sometimes they require risk taking and often deal with business.



Are you?...

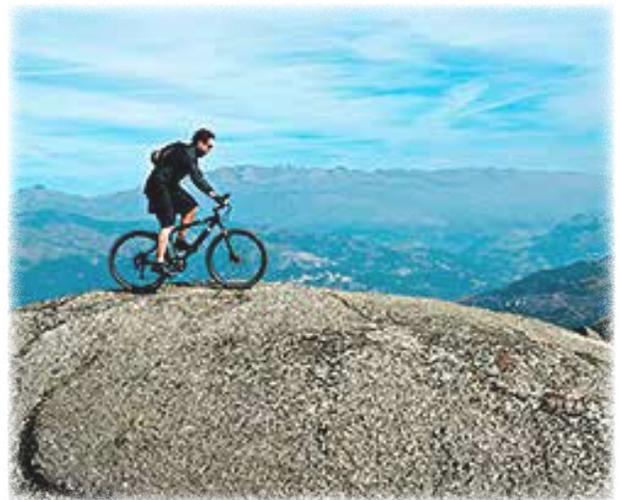
- _____ Agreeable
- _____ Sociable
- _____ Persuasive
- _____ Ambitious
- _____ Energetic
- _____ Enthusiastic
- _____ Adventurous
- _____ Popular
- _____ Talkative
- _____ Outgoing
- _____ Assertive (taking charge of situations)
- _____ Self-confident (believing in yourself and your abilities)

Do you like to?...

- _____ Make decisions
- _____ Lead a group
- _____ Start projects
- _____ Organize activities
- _____ Sell things or promote ideas
- _____ Start your own business
- _____ Meet important people
- _____ Have power or status

Do your hobbies include?...

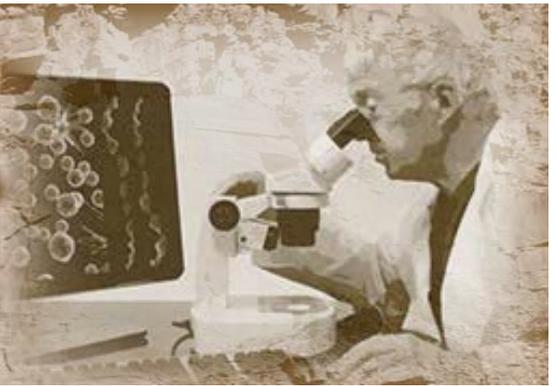
- _____ Selling products
- _____ Being a club president or team captain
- _____ Learning about government
- _____ Reading current events



Occupation Examples	Interest Groups	Big Sky Pathway
Chief Executives	ECS	Business, Management, and Information Systems
General and Operations Managers	EC	Business, Management, and Information Systems
Financial Managers	ECS	Business, Management, and Information Systems
Food Service Managers	ECS	Business, Management, and Information Systems
Lodging Managers	ECS	Business, Management, and Information Systems
Property and Real Estate Managers	ECR	Business, Management, and Information Systems
Loan Officers	ESC	Business, Management, and Information Systems
Lawyers	ECI	Human Services and Resources
Supervisors, Food Service	ERC	Business, Management, and Information Systems
Bartenders	ESR	Business, Management, and Information Systems

INVESTIGATIVE

Investigative people are often called thinkers. They like to think, explore ideas, and study information. Investigative occupations frequently involve working with numbers or other data and require an extensive amount of thinking. These occupations can involve searching for facts and figuring out problems mentally.



Are you?...

- Precise
- Logical
- Curious
- Observant
- Cautious
- Scholarly
- Scientific
- Complex
- Self-confident
- Intellectual
- Broadminded
- Inquisitive (questioning why or how)
- Reserved (holding back socially, not outgoing)
- Analytical (breaking data or information into parts and examining them to learn more about the whole)

Do you like to?...

- Explore a variety of ideas
- Use computers
- Work by yourself
- Perform lab experiments
- Read scientific or technical journals
- Be challenged
- Do research

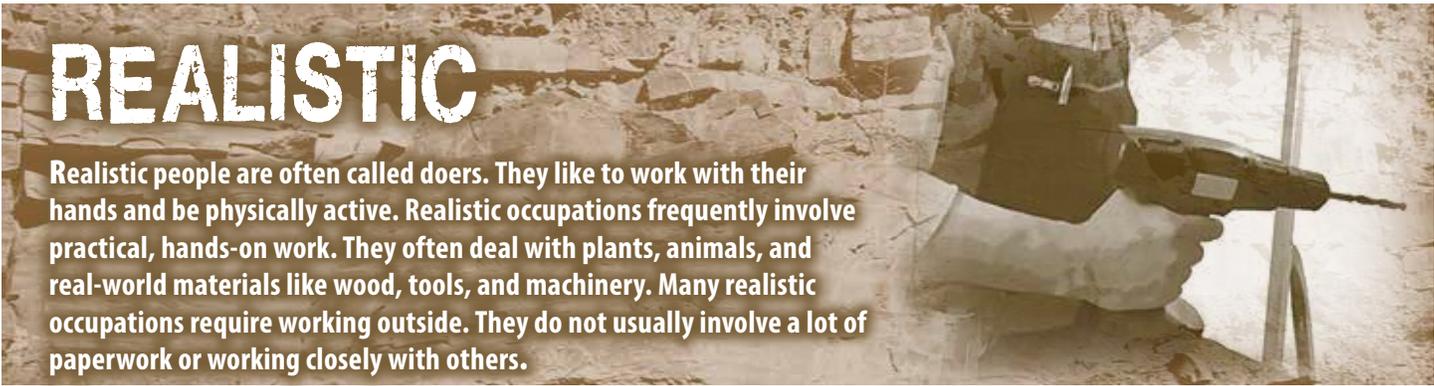
Do your hobbies include?...

- Book Club
- Astronomy (studying the stars)
- Crossword puzzles/board games
- Computers
- Visiting museums

Occupation Examples	Interest Groups	Big Sky Pathway
Computer Programmers	IRC	Business, Management, and Information Systems
Computer Software Engineers, Applications	IRC	Business, Management, and Information Systems
Computer Systems Analysts	ICR	Business, Management, and Information Systems
Database Administrators	ICR	Business, Management, and Information Systems
Computer Systems Administrators	IRC	Business, Management, and Information Systems
Data Communications Analysts	IRC	Business, Management, and Information Systems
Agricultural and Food Scientists	IR	Environmental and Agricultural Systems
Conservation Scientists	IRC	Environmental and Agricultural Systems
Clinical, Counseling, and School Psychologists	ISA	Human Services and Resources
Chiropractors	IRS	Health Sciences

REALISTIC

Realistic people are often called doers. They like to work with their hands and be physically active. Realistic occupations frequently involve practical, hands-on work. They often deal with plants, animals, and real-world materials like wood, tools, and machinery. Many realistic occupations require working outside. They do not usually involve a lot of paperwork or working closely with others.



Are you?...

- Practical
- Stable
- Thrifty
- Ambitious
- Mechanical
- Athletic
- Independent
- Persistent
- Self-controlled
- Curious about the physical world
- Frank (willing to share your thoughts and feelings)
- Concrete (preferring real things to ideas)
- Systematic (following a set process or plan)

Do you like to?...

- Tinker with machines/vehicles
- Work outdoors
- Work on electrical equipment
- Be physically active
- Use your hands
- Tend/train animals
- Build things



Do your hobbies include?...

- Playing sports
- Gardening
- Hunting/fishing
- Woodworking
- Repairing cars or equipment

Occupation Examples	Interest Groups	Big Sky Pathway
Farmers and Ranchers	REC	Environmental and Agricultural Systems
Carpenters	RCE	Industrial, Manufacturing, and Engineering Systems
Cooks, restaurant	REA	Business, Management, and Information Systems
Bricklayers & Stonemasons	RCE	Industrial, Manufacturing, and Engineering Systems
Electricians	RCE	Industrial, Manufacturing, and Engineering Systems
Janitors and Cleaners	RCE	Human Services and Resources
Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	RCS	Human Services and Resources
Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers	RIA	Environmental and Agricultural Systems
Stock Clerks and Order Fillers	RCE	Business, Management, and Information Systems
Farmworkers and Laborers, crop	RCE	Environmental and Agricultural Systems

SOCIAL

Social people are often called helpers or “people people.” They like working with people more than things or ideas. Social occupations frequently involve working with, communicating with, and teaching people. These occupations often involve helping or providing service to others.



Are you?...

- Helpful
- Generous
- Insightful
- Forgiving
- Understanding
- Patient
- Kind
- Empathetic (being sensitive to others' feelings, thoughts, and experiences)
- Cooperative
- Idealistic (working for perfection, sometimes forgetting practical things)
- Outgoing
- Friendly

Do you like to?...

- Work in groups
- Help people with their problems
- Teach/train others
- Do volunteer work
- Play team sports
- Serve others

Do your hobbies include?...

- Helping others with personal concerns
- Religious activities
- Attending sporting events
- Volunteering for social action groups
- Caring for children
- Joining clubs or organizations

Occupation Examples	Interest Groups	Big Sky Pathway
Education Administrators	SEI	Human Services and Resources
Employment Specialists	SEC	Business, Management, and Information Systems
Child, Family, and School Social Workers	SAE	Human Services and Resources
Medical and Public Health Social Workers	SIA	Human Services and Resources
Clergy	SAE	Human Services and Resources
Preschool Teachers	SAC	Human Services and Resources
Elementary School Teachers	SAI	Human Services and Resources
Middle School Teachers	SAI	Human Services and Resources
Secondary School Teachers	SAI	Human Services and Resources
Teacher Assistants	SCA	Human Services and Resources

STEP 2: LEARN MORE ABOUT CAREERS

As you continue to learn more about yourself and what careers might be a good fit for you, make it your mission to discover as much as you can about those careers too. Use every opportunity to find out what the careers really involve.



Computer Resources

Use online resources of career information like MCIS, which allows you to explore occupations which interest you and provide tools to help you match occupations to your personal characteristics. You can also find scholarship opportunities and research schools. Explore more at www.careers.mt.gov.

Books and Periodicals

There are thousands of books of many types and levels of detail on occupations. Some, such as encyclopedias, will provide information on a wide variety of careers. Others will give you very specific information on a particular career, such as trade journals.

Information Interviewing

Ask a worker who's employed in a career you are interested in to visit with you. Most individuals enjoy talking about their work, so they are willing to help. Prepare questions ahead of time so you can keep the conversation focused. The questions in the box below would be a good start.

Questions to Ask:

What do workers in the occupation really do on the job?

What are the working conditions--environment, hours, etc.?

What skills and knowledge are needed?

What level and area of education are needed?

What kind of experience is required?

How much does it pay?

Is employment in the occupation growing or shrinking?

Job Shadowing

Job shadowing takes information interviewing one step farther, you might say. Visit people working at their jobs. Ask them to explain what they are doing and how it contributes to their workplace. Understand that in some fields, such as healthcare, there may be legal and safety restrictions which limit job shadowing activities.

Participating

Learn about occupations by participating in a school-to-career work-based program, technical education program, or a cooperative education program. Part-time and summer jobs are also great opportunities to learn more about career options.

Volunteer

Even if you cannot find a part-time or summer job in a career that interests you, you may be able to assist someone in that job by volunteering. It will give you the chance to find out if you really like that career field, and you'll make valuable contacts in the industry. If you do good work now, employers will remember you once you've gotten the education you need to qualify for the job.

And remember, sometimes it is as important to discover that you do not like a career as it is to discover that you do like one. It is better to discover that now than to wait until you have spent several years and thousands of dollars in college to find out.

To find out which of these career exploration experiences are available to you or the best career choices, ask your school counselor or teachers. And don't forget to look for opportunities on your own.

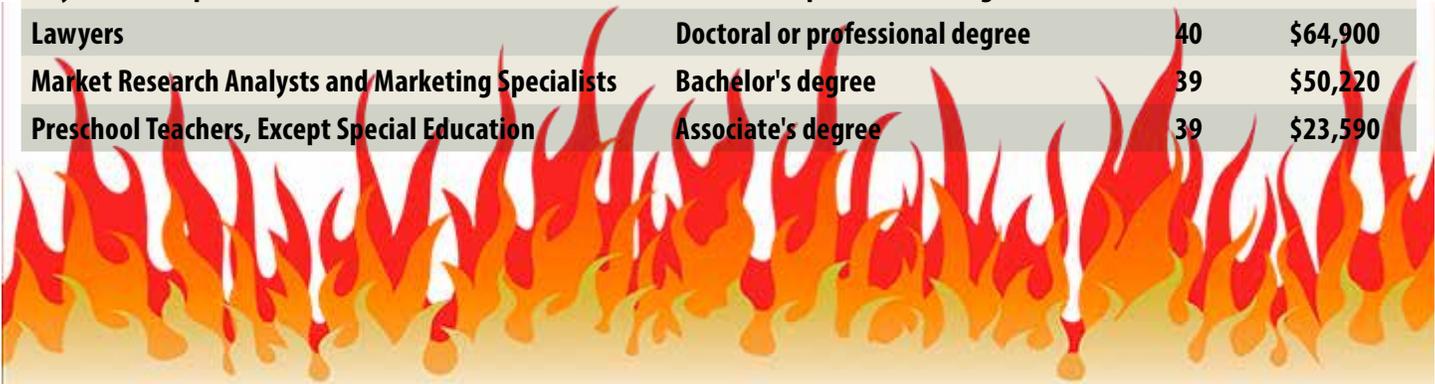
HOT CAREER TRENDS

Your interests and aptitudes should be the biggest factors in choosing a career. But it is also wise to be aware of career trends in the labor market. Which careers are on the “hot” list, projected to grow rapidly or need the most workers?

You may very likely not be interested in pursuing any of the careers on the “hot” lists, but becoming aware of the social and economic factors driving those career trends might pay off for you. For example, maybe you have your heart set on being an accountant and couldn’t care less about pursuing any “hot” health careers. But since you are aware that health care is a growing, good-paying field, you could consider specializing in accounting services for healthcare providers.

HOT Careers in Montana Requiring Post-Secondary Education

Occupation	Education Required	Annual Openings	Median Annual Wage
Registered Nurses	Associate's degree	275	\$58,220
Elementary School Teachers	Bachelor's degree	126	\$44,500
Accountants and Auditors	Bachelor's degree	116	\$51,680
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	Postsecondary non-degree award	113	\$37,020
Secondary School Teachers	Bachelor's degree	92	\$46,510
Nursing Aides, Orderlies, and Attendants	Postsecondary non-degree award	89	\$24,080
General and Operations Managers	Associate's degree	88	\$78,400
Computer Support Specialists	Some college, no degree	87	\$37,400
Forest and Conservation Technicians	Associate's degree	79	\$31,310
Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	Postsecondary non-degree award	72	\$47,220
Dental Assistants	Postsecondary non-degree award	60	\$31,070
Pharmacists	Doctoral or professional degree	50	\$107,510
Graphic Designers	Bachelor's degree	49	\$31,540
Teachers and Instructors, All Other	Bachelor's degree	49	\$33,210
Civil Engineers	Bachelor's degree	47	\$61,840
Dental Hygienists	Associate's degree	42	\$68,750
Cost Estimators	Bachelor's degree	42	\$53,390
Physical Therapists	Doctoral or professional degree	41	\$68,390
Lawyers	Doctoral or professional degree	40	\$64,900
Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	Bachelor's degree	39	\$50,220
Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education	Associate's degree	39	\$23,590



STEP 3: MAKE A PLAN (AND PUT IT DOWN IN WRITING)

This might be a good time to remind you that you don't need to decide on a career right this very minute. But it is important to give it some thought so you can start planning your high school courses. You don't want to find yourself, as a junior or a senior, without enough semesters left to fit in all the classes you need for a technical institute or college program you want to attend.

So if you have at least a general idea of a career area you are interested in, find out the specifics about the type of education recommended or other training options for careers in that field.

If your career area requires you to attend college, find out which colleges offer programs in your field, and what their admissions standards are. Then plan your high school work accordingly.

If your career area doesn't require post-secondary education, find out about other training options. Plan to take high school courses that will allow you to explore careers of interest and to gain the skills you'll need.

Aim High

So what happens when you've taken the assessments and investigated different career areas, but still have no idea what you want to pursue? Your best bet is to "aim high." Plan your high school coursework with the highest level of college education in mind. That way, when you do decide on a career field, you'll be able to get into those institutions with challenging admissions standards.

What are your Options?

Different careers require different levels and types of educational and training. Here are a few of the more common options to prepare for your career:

Technical or vocational training

Montana has several institutions that offer technical or vocational training. There are five colleges of technology that offer formal short-term programs (lasting just a few months) up to associate degree programs (about two years). Private colleges, hospital-based programs, and tribal-operated community colleges also offer shorter-term programs. And don't forget the state's colleges and universities. They also offer several associate degree programs.

In all of these cases, the programs are generally technical in nature and focus on a specific career field. The institutions work cooperatively with businesses to teach the skills needed in today's workplaces. The programs include some general education as well, to prepare well-rounded individuals ready for employment. But the programs are definitely hands-on, giving you an immediate chance to get a feel for the actual work involved.



More Options:

College & University

Depending on how many more years after high school you want to invest in your career preparation, the choices are almost limitless for those with a college degree. Private colleges and public universities provide the type of well-rounded education that employers look for when hiring workers in a wide range of careers.

Earning a bachelor's degree involves a minimum of four years. If you're willing to invest even more time for a master's degree (usually another year or two), additional careers would be open to you. Additional careers (such as dentist) are open to those who really want to continue their education and get a doctorate or professional degree.

Just remember, too many people enroll in college just because they don't know what else to do. Then they end up switching majors multiple times, taking extra semesters to graduate, and ending up with thousands of dollars in school loans, all for a degree they may not have needed. If you do attend college, make sure you have a plan, and that the career you've chosen requires a college degree.

Apprenticeship

If you're a hands-on learner, another great option for career training is apprenticeship. Apprenticeship combines on-the-job training with some classroom studies. In both, the focus is totally on the skills necessary for that occupation. Apprentices learn the latest skills and technologies that employers need. They are guided and supervised by experienced workers, learning the tasks involved in a very structured way.

Because participants are learning at the worksite, they are also earning a wage. As skills increase, so does the paycheck. The "earn while you learn" concept is often recognized as an industry scholarship worth up to \$150,000.

Careers that can be learned through apprenticeship in Montana are: aircraft mechanics, auto body repairers, automobile mechanics, avionics technicians, bakers, boilermakers, bricklayers, bookbinders and bindery workers, bus and truck (diesel engine) mechanics, building maintenance workers, carpenters, child care workers, cement masons, communications equipment mechanics, chefs and dinner cooks, cabinetmakers, electricians, electrical line installers and repairers, farm equipment mechanics, fire fighters, glaziers, general construction workers, heating and cooling system mechanics, hydroelectric station operators, heavy equipment mechanics, jewelers, motorcycle mechanics, machinists, millwrights, meat cutters (butchers), operating engineers, office machine repairers, parts salespeople, painters, plumbers and pipefitters, printing press operators, pharmacy technicians, roofers, respiratory therapists, real estate appraisers, structural metal workers, sheet metal workers, shipping and receiving clerks, security alarm installers, and tile setters.

For more information on apprenticeship possibilities, contact your nearest Job Service Workforce Center, or contact Mark Maki, state director of the Apprenticeship and Training Program in Helena at 444-3556.



Military



U.S. Military Branches

Air Force
Army
Coast Guard
Navy
Marine Corps
Air National Guard
Army National Guard

The U.S. Armed Forces provide training and work experience in a wide range of career fields. Career opportunities are divided between enlisted personnel and officers. Most enlisted personnel need at least a high school diploma. Enlisted personnel carry out the basic operations of the military in areas such as combat, healthcare, engineering,

and construction. Officers must have a bachelor's or more advanced degree. They must supervise and manage all military activities.

Reserve Office Training Corps (ROTC) programs in each of the branches of the military offer additional opportunities for training and experience. Those who qualify are eligible for financial assistance to attend college, in return for agreeing to serve in the military after graduation.

Specific career opportunities in the armed forces vary somewhat by military branch. Each of the armed forces has an active component and a reserve component.

For more information on career opportunities in the armed forces, visit the website www.todaysmilitary.com. "Today's Military" is an educational and informational website designed to help young people better understand the U.S. military and the opportunities it represents for America's young people.

NOW PUT IT IN WRITING

If preparing for your future is a journey, then your career plan is your map. Just as you wouldn't look at a map once, then leave it behind and trust your memory to guide you, you shouldn't keep your career plan entirely in your head.

So write it down.

Often we don't recognize that our ideas aren't fully-formed until we try to articulate them. Take the time to commit your plan to paper, or create an online portfolio using MCIS. This will let you go back and evaluate your progress, and serve as a reminder for what you still have to do.

Remember, you can change your plan as often as your interests change. The important thing is to keep track of where you want to go.

A good place to start your written plan is with a high school course plan. This book provides one for you to use on pages 26 & 27. Be sure to refer to the high

school graduation requirements listed on page 5. Also, find out the requirements for your specific school district, and the classes currently offered at your future high school.

If you're interested in classes that aren't offered in your school, look into opportunities for distance learning. Ask your teachers, school counselor, or principal for information. You may even want to look into taking college-level courses via distance learning while you're still in high school. In some cases, you can get both high school and college credit for courses.

You don't have to go it alone! Remember all the people available to help you develop your high school educational plan. Ask your school counselor, homeroom teacher, advisor, and parents for help and guidance. Don't forget that MCIS provides an electronic career portfolio to help you develop your high school educational plan through Big Sky Pathways MAP. You can access MCIS at www.careers.mt.gov.



HIGH SCHOOL COURSE PLAN

FRESHMAN YEAR

Subject	Fall Semester	Spring Semester
English Language Arts (4 credits required)		
Mathematics (2 credits required, at least 3 credits recommended)		
Social Studies (2 credits required, at least 3 credits recommended)		
Science (2 credits required)		
Health/Physical Education (1 credit required)		
Arts (1 credit required)		
Vocational/Technical Education (1 credit required)		
Foreign Language (2 credits recommended)		
Computer Science		
Other Electives		

HIGH SCHOOL COURSE PLAN

SOPHOMORE YEAR

Subject	Fall Semester	Spring Semester
English Language Arts (4 credits required)		
Mathematics (2 credits required, at least 3 credits recommended)		
Social Studies (2 credits required, at least 3 credits recommended)		
Science (2 credits required)		
Health/Physical Education (1 credit required)		
Arts (1 credit required)		
Vocational/Technical Education (1 credit required)		
Foreign Language (2 credits recommended)		
Computer Science		
Other Electives		

HIGH SCHOOL COURSE PLAN

JUNIOR YEAR

Subject	Fall Semester	Spring Semester
English Language Arts (4 credits required)		
Mathematics (2 credits required, at least 3 credits recommended)		
Social Studies (2 credits required, at least 3 credits recommended)		
Science (2 credits required)		
Health/Physical Education (1 credit required)		
Arts (1 credit required)		
Vocational/Technical Education (1 credit required)		
Foreign Language (2 credits recommended)		
Computer Science		
Other Electives		

HIGH SCHOOL COURSE PLAN

SENIOR YEAR

Subject	Fall Semester	Spring Semester
English Language Arts (4 credits required)		
Mathematics (2 credits required, at least 3 credits recommended)		
Social Studies (2 credits required, at least 3 credits recommended)		
Science (2 credits required)		
Health/Physical Education (1 credit required)		
Arts (1 credit required)		
Vocational/Technical Education (1 credit required)		
Foreign Language (2 credits recommended)		
Computer Science		
Other Electives		

GOOD LUCK AND BON VOYAGE

Career planning isn't always fun. Sometimes it can be tedious, disappointing, and downright discouraging. You can almost always find something you'd rather do (watch tv, surf the web, walk the dog, clean the toilet, etc.). And since there is no due date and no grade at stake, it is a very easy task to put off until later.

So perhaps you should do one more bit of planning.

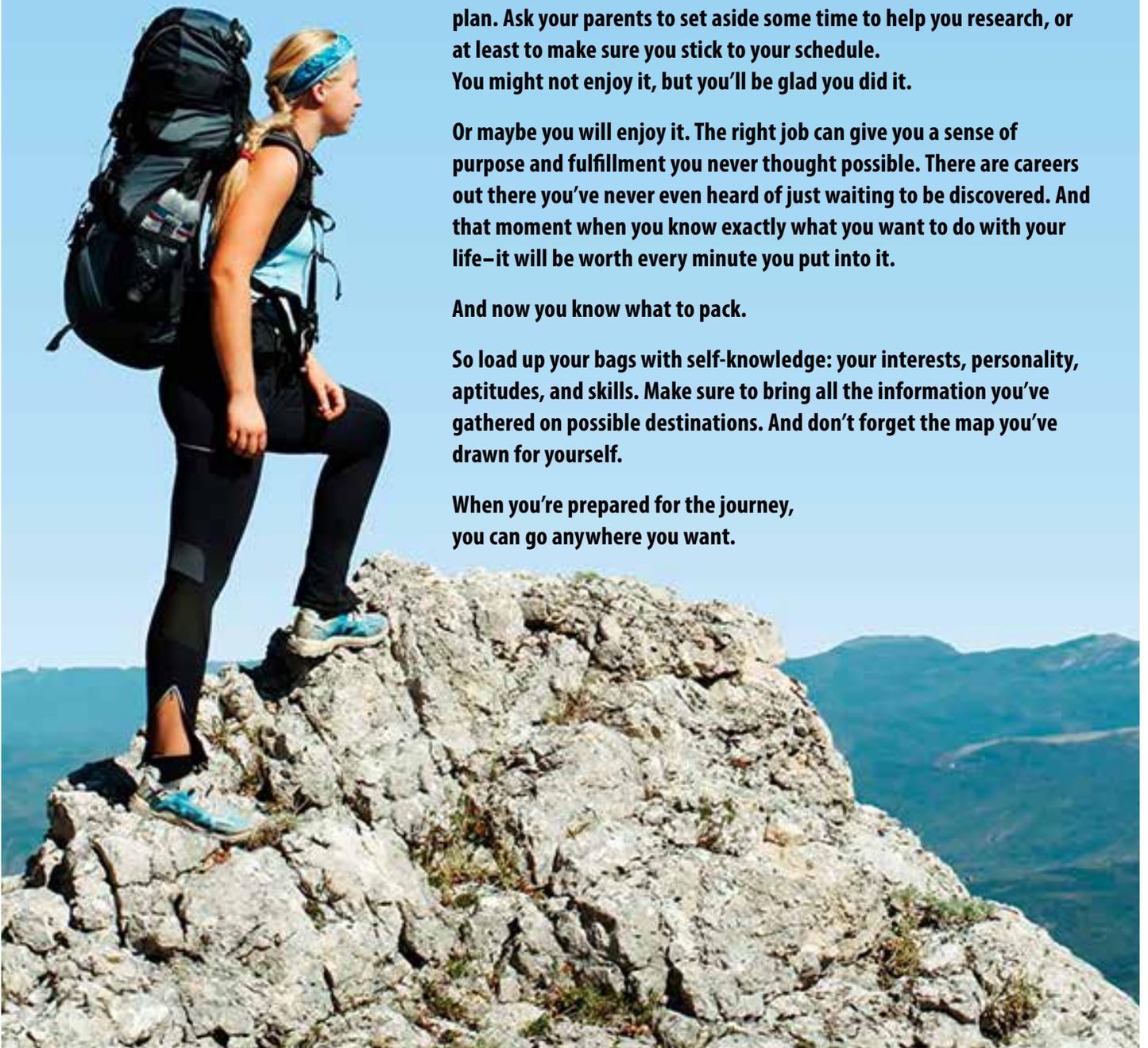
Set aside a time, even just an hour each week, and work on your career plan. Ask your parents to set aside some time to help you research, or at least to make sure you stick to your schedule. You might not enjoy it, but you'll be glad you did it.

Or maybe you will enjoy it. The right job can give you a sense of purpose and fulfillment you never thought possible. There are careers out there you've never even heard of just waiting to be discovered. And that moment when you know exactly what you want to do with your life—it will be worth every minute you put into it.

And now you know what to pack.

So load up your bags with self-knowledge: your interests, personality, aptitudes, and skills. Make sure to bring all the information you've gathered on possible destinations. And don't forget the map you've drawn for yourself.

When you're prepared for the journey, you can go anywhere you want.





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5,000 copies of this public document were produced at an estimated cost of \$0.82 per copy, for a total cost of \$4,099.00, which includes \$4,099.00 for printing and \$0.00 for distribution.