

# 5 Ways to Find Career Ideas

Many high school students feel that they need to have their whole lives planned out before graduation. That's a lot of pressure to take on, and it really isn't practical because your goals and desires change over time. At this point, the best way to prepare for the process of career planning is to take some steps to get to know more about yourself.

Start by considering your options. You can take many paths, and you may discover new talents and passions in the process of exploring. The quick exercises below can help lead you in the right direction.

## 1. Think About What You Love

What classes have you found especially inspiring? What activities keep you so absorbed that you don't even notice how much time has passed? Listing 10 things you love can help reveal possible paths.

Can you make connections between elements on your list? Are a group of items related to the arts or social activities or technology? What can you build by combining your passions?

Many people work in a few different jobs before choosing a career path.

## 2. Identify Defining Experiences

Think about three experiences that taught you something about yourself. Choose the one that gave you the greatest sense of satisfaction and write a sentence that explains why that was so. If you can pinpoint what makes you happy, you can aim toward a career that will provide those types of experiences.

## 3. Create a Self-Portrait

Are you friendly, creative, impatient, funny, organized? Try writing down a list of 10 qualities you feel describe your personality. Ask your friends and family to name some of your qualities — sometimes other people see us more clearly than we see ourselves. Add their suggestions to your list. Now think about what sort of career fits the person your list describes.

## 4. Consider Your Strengths and Weaknesses

Make a list of your five top strengths and weaknesses. What sorts of employers would be interested in your strengths? If you're a good public speaker, for example, explore what types of careers call for that skill.

Your weaknesses can also tell you a lot about where you might go. You can either steer away from careers that require skills you're not confident about or work to improve weaknesses that may keep you from your goals.

## 5. Explore Careers

What do actuaries or archaeologists really do? What sorts of opportunities will there be in the future for architects or art directors? Imagine yourself in different roles as you explore Major & Career Profiles. You can find information on more than 300 careers here, which range from air traffic controller to wildlife technician.

Remember, even if you know someone who has been planning to be a doctor since the age of seven, most young people don't know what they want to do or be. Many adults actually work in a few different jobs before selecting a career path. You have time to get to know yourself and find a career that suits you.