

# Career Exploration and Preparation



**Credits**  
Before College

# Table of Contents

<b>Weblinks and Resources.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>7</b>
Parent/Educator Notes.....	10
Homeschool Co-ops.....	15
<b>Part I Career Exploration .....</b>	<b>16</b>
Course Schedule: Part I – Career Exploration.....	17
<b>Keys to Your Future.....</b>	<b>19</b>
1.1R Start Here.....	20
1.2A Building Your Team.....	23
1.3A What the Bible Says About Work .....	25
1.4A Your Family Name .....	29
1.5A The Cost of Living.....	31
<b>Your Vocational Profile .....</b>	<b>35</b>
2.1R Career Exploration Steps .....	36
2.2A Self-Reflection .....	38
2.3R Career Assessments.....	42
2.4A Personality-Interests: Holland Code.....	46
2.5A Personality: Myers-Briggs Type Indicator.....	50
2.6A Life and Work Values.....	52
<b>Occupational Profiles .....</b>	<b>55</b>
3.1P Build Your Master Vocational List.....	56
3.2P Evaluate Your Interest .....	58
3.3P Education Pathways.....	59
3.4P Occupational Evaluation Worksheet .....	62
3.5P Is it a Good Match?.....	64
<b>Informational Interviews.....</b>	<b>65</b>
4.1P Conducting Informational Interviews.....	66
<b>Final Review .....</b>	<b>77</b>
5.1P Credential Check Up .....	78
5.2P Job Shadows .....	82
5.3A Making a Career Decision .....	83

<b>Part II Career Preparation</b> .....	<b>85</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>86</b>
Course Schedule: Part II – Career Preparation.....	87
<b>Capstone Project</b> .....	<b>89</b>
6.1 Start Here .....	90
6.2 Choosing Your Capstone Project.....	93
6.3 Planning Your Capstone Project.....	96
* Internship or Volunteering.....	99
* Micro Business .....	104
* Grand Project .....	107
<b>Skill Smart</b> .....	<b>109</b>
7.1 How to Win Friends and Influence People.....	110
7.2 Skills Check Up.....	112
7.3 Your 10,000 Hours Starts Now .....	116
7.4 First and Lasting Impressions .....	118
7.5 Networking with Confidence.....	120
7.6 Grit.....	122
<b>Professional Portfolio</b> .....	<b>125</b>
8.1 S.M.A.R.T. Goals .....	126
8.2 Saying Thank You.....	129
8.3 Build Your Brand.....	131
8.4 Resume, Cover Letter, References .....	134
8.5 Slay the Interview.....	138
<b>Grading Rubrics</b> .....	<b>140</b>

# Introduction

Finding a career that you love takes time, effort, and strategy. It's like playing the game of chess, where you strategically plan for your next move. Chances are, if you sit back and hope that the right career comes your way, you may instead find yourself playing the game of Trouble, Twister, or Sorry. That's why this book matters.

*Career Exploration and Preparation* will take you through the career decision-making process. Along the way, you will learn a lot about yourself, explore different careers, and identify occupations that fit your design.

## Key reasons why career exploration matters

- Increases students' awareness of career options
- Helps students see how they fit into the working world
- Encourages students to plan high school courses based on their future goals
- Improves academic performance
- Saves time and money by pursuing a defined goal
- Introduces students to employment skills valued by all employers

## ***PART I – Career Exploration: Choosing a Best-Fit Career (Semester I)***

These lessons help students better understand themselves, identify their vocational interests, explore careers, and confirm their career interests by connecting with professionals in the community.

## ***PART II – Career Preparation: Skill Smart (Semester II)***

Students are guided through the process of completing a capstone project in their career area of interest. This can help confirm their chosen career interest. These lessons also help students recognize and cultivate relevant job skills that are valued no matter the career they select.

### ***Recommended Companion Reading***

Part I: **Biography of Your Choice** (review *Recommended List*)

Part II: ***Start Here* by Alex and Brett Harris** ISBN 978-1601422705

***How to Win Friends and Influence People* by Dale Carnegie** ISBN 978-0671027032

Plan ahead and have these books on hand. Students are encouraged to read at least 15 minutes a day. If you are working with a limited time schedule, these books can be omitted. This will not affect a student's ability to complete the main content of the course.

## ***Scheduling***

On average, students should plan on one-hour a day, 3-4x a week, to complete the lessons and recommended reading. The length and type of assignments throughout the course will vary. Some lessons will take more time and commitment. To help you identify the time required for each assignment, each lesson in Part I has been assigned a code:

**R – Reading:** Short informational reading. The lesson will take less than 10 minutes.

**A – Assignments:** On average, these lessons can be completed in an hour or less.

**P – Projects:** These lessons will take multiple days, or sometimes weeks, to complete. They are often multi-step, creative, and critical thinking assignments that have real-world application.

As you complete each lesson, discuss what you've learned with your parents. If you are taking this with a group, you can partner with a classmate on projects and share what you are learning in group presentations.

In the future, you will find that employers and college professors assign projects with a date due but may not provide a daily lesson plan. It is assumed that you can manage your own schedule to meet the target completion dates. You will be practicing this scheduling method in this course. Use the included ***Course Schedule*** as your guide. At the beginning of the course, fill in target completion dates for the entire semester. If you need assistance, ask your personal assistant (parent) to help get you started. Tip: Don't rely on your memory! Write due dates on a calendar. Then, working backwards, determine what you should accomplish each day to meet the deadline.

## Homeschool Co-ops

---

This curriculum can easily be used in a homeschool co-op or group setting. I taught it to a group of students grades 8-12. It spanned that age-range nicely. Here are some additional ideas to consider as you design your class:

**Team Projects.** Students can collaborate on projects as teams. They learn from one another, enjoy interaction, and may accomplish as a team projects that would be too much for one person.

**Class Presentations.** Ask students to present their individual investigation or completed assignments through small group discussion or PowerPoint presentation to the class.

**Peer Evaluation.** Where appropriate, ask students to complete a peer evaluation for components of a project, such as a project presentation. Peer to peer feedback is an important skill and can help others identify their greatest strengths.

**Speakers.** I would encourage you to invite outside speakers to come in and speak to your class. You can suggest topics or let your guest select something based on your suggestions. Ideas might include: How faith is lived out in the workplace; How to dress for an interview; Skills employers are looking for; Careers without college; Great first-time jobs.

**Business Tours.** Encourage students to form small groups and arrange for a business tour, or, facilitate a group class tour. This shared experience can be valuable as you talk through work environments, expectations, skills, and contributions to the community. One of the best field trips I arranged was through our local sheriff. Students met at the county courthouse for a day and professionals from various departments came through to talk about their jobs – a clerk, judge, investigator, public defender, prosecutor, sheriff, and officers. Check with a local manufacturer, TV station, tech college, other parents, or your Chamber of Commerce for ideas. Some communities even host community-wide events and invite the public to participate in open house tours.

**Spring Showcase.** Invite parents and host a year-end project fair where students display their resume, project board, career investigation process, or capstone project.

- ➡ Encourage students to wear business attire.
- ➡ Have each student make a presentation that includes a PowerPoint with pictures that tells a story of their project. They should practice! Include guidelines: Nail your opening and closing. Time your presentation to be 3-5 minutes.
- ➡ Put up a table to display students' portfolios, resume, business cards ... all that they created during this course.

**Part II – Career Preparation.** Use the discussion questions in the back of the book *Start Here* to kick off this unit.