

Materials:

Your Dream Career activity on page 8 in this workbook (page 4 in the student workbook)

Large white paper and color markers to write the K-W-L activity and save until the end of the curriculum

A set of 20 career match cards for each group (pages 9-28 in this workbook)
-preparation – print out enough copies of the career cards for each group (3-5 students) to have a set. Cut the cards up and put one full (20) or half (10) set in plastic bags or envelopes.)

Goals:

Get students to think about their future dreams. Review what students already know and draw on prior knowledge about college and careers. Get them excited about getting ready for high school and beginning their own preparation for college. Prepare them for the week-long curriculum. Learn a little more about how much college they will need for different careers.

Time:

60 minutes total (3 20-minute activities)

Instructions:

Worksheet: Your Dream Career

1. What are your dreams?

Ask students, “Close your eyes and imagine you life in 10 years. What job will you be doing? Will you be a doctor, lawyer, nurse, plumber, electrician, computer engineer, business owner? Think about what you really enjoy doing most in school, out of school, on weekends.” Open your eyes and turn to page 4 in your workbook. Write down three things you enjoy and why and think about what job might allow you to do some of what you enjoy. Write down one or two careers you might want to have.

2. K-W-L (20 minutes)

Write on a large white paper the following three columns:

Know	What to Learn and Do	Learned

K-W-L Instructions: What do you already know about preparing for college? What questions do you have? What do you want to be doing now to prepare for college? Ask students: “What do you need to learn to prepare for college? Spend 10-15 minutes finding out what they know and what they want to learn. Prompt them with questions like – Do you know how college students take notes and study for tests? Do you know what courses you have to take in high school to be ready for college? Do you know how much college you need to be a nurse? Other careers?

Leave the learned column blank to come back and fill in after day five of the curriculum.

3. Career Match Cards (20 minutes)

- Divide the students into teams of 2 to 4, depending on the size of the class. Give each group a bag or a rubber banded pack of career titles, education needed and job descriptions for 20 careers. (If you want to shorten the activity put only half of the careers - 10 - in each bag.) Explain to students that they are to try to correctly match the title, education needed and job description for each career as quickly as possible.
- When a team thinks it has completed the matches, the team members should raise their hands to have you check to see if they have done the matches correctly.
- Give the students 15 minutes and then end the game. Give each team 1 point for each correct match. (If a career is matched completely correctly, they will receive 3 points for that career.)
- Announce the winning group and hand out prizes if desired.
- Go through each of the careers and review the correct answers with the class.



YOUR DREAM CAREER

Have you ever thought about what your dream job looks like? There are thousands of different careers to choose from and there is no one career that is perfect for all people. So how do you know which one is right for you?

A good way to start your search for the perfect career is to think about the things that interest you.

What activities do you enjoy? What is it about them that you like? List at least three activities. Include things you like to do both in and out of school.

I enjoy: _____

because: _____

I enjoy: _____

because: _____

I enjoy: _____

because: _____

List possible careers:

Urban Planner

Average Pay: \$45,000-\$100,000 per year

Education: Bachelor's degree, more \$ with a master's or doctorate



Job Description:

These workers make long and short-term decisions about the management and development of towns.

Their primary aim is to find the balance between the need for housing, industrial development, agriculture, recreation, transportation networks and the environment, to allow appropriate development to take place.

Skills:

Ability to work well with a variety of people. They need to take into account the views of a wide range of people. Participating in interest groups is a key aspect of the worker's role. Requires using information technology systems such as CAD (computer-aided design) or GIS (geographical information systems).

Life on the Job:

They often travel to inspect the features of land under consideration for development or regulation, including its current use and the types of structures on it. Those who are involved in site development inspections spend most of their time in the field. Although most have a scheduled 40-hour workweek, they frequently attend evening or weekend meetings or public hearings with citizens' groups. They may experience the pressure of deadlines and tight work schedules, as well as political pressure generated by interest groups affected by proposals related to urban development and land use.

Biologist

Average Pay: \$50,000-\$88,000 per year

**Education: Master's degree;
more job opportunities and higher pay with a doctorate**

Job Description:

Study living organisms and their relationship to their environment. They research problems dealing with life processes and living organisms. Most specialize in some area such as zoology (the study of animals) or microbiology (the study of microscopic organisms).

Skills:

Ability to work independently or as part of a team and be able to communicate clearly, both orally and in writing. Those doing field research in remote areas must have physical stamina. They also must have patience and self-discipline to conduct long and detailed research projects.

Life on the Job:

Usually work regular hours in offices or laboratories and generally are not exposed to unsafe or unhealthy conditions. Those who work with dangerous organisms or toxic substances in the laboratory must follow strict safety procedures to avoid contamination. Many in this field – such as botanists, ecologists, and zoologists – take field trips that involve strenuous physical activity and primitive living conditions. Work in the field may involve working in warm or cold climates, in all kinds of weather. In their research, they may dig, chip with a hammer, scoop with a net, and carry equipment in a backpack. They also may climb, stand, kneel, or dive.

Graphic Designer

Average Pay:
\$29,000-\$69,000 per year
Education: Bachelor's degree

Job Description:

Decide the most effective way of getting a message across in print, electronic, and/or film media using a variety of methods such as color, type, illustration, photography, animation, and various print and layout techniques. Develop the overall layout and design of magazines, newspapers, journals, corporate reports, and other publications. Produce promotional displays, packaging, and marketing brochures for products and services. Design distinctive logos for products and businesses. Also develop material for Internet Web pages, interactive media, and multimedia projects. Also may produce the credits that appear before and after television programs and movies.

Skills:

Need to be familiar with computer design software. Also must be creative and able to communicate ideas in writing, visually, and verbally. Because consumer tastes can change quickly, they need to read well, be open to new ideas and influences, and quickly react to changing trends. Problem-solving skills, paying attention to detail and the ability to work independently and under pressure also are important traits. People in this field need self-discipline to start projects on their own, to budget their time, and to meet deadlines and production schedules. Good business sense and sales ability also are important, especially for those who freelance or run their own business.

Life on the Job:

Employed by advertising, publishing, or design firms, they generally work regular hours in comfortable settings. Those who freelance often work from home and generally are hired on a job-by-job basis. They frequently adjust their workday to suit their clients' schedules and deadlines.



Occupational Therapist

Average Pay: \$45,000-\$67,000 per year

Education: Master's degree



Job Description:

Help people improve their ability to perform tasks in their daily living and working environments. Work with individuals who have conditions that are mentally, physically, developmentally, or emotionally disabling. Help them to develop, recover, or maintain daily living and work skills. Their goal is to help clients have independent, productive, and satisfying lives.

Skills:

Must have excellent written and verbal communication skills. It is essential to be able to listen carefully and critically analyze.

Life on the Job:

This occupation works in hospitals and other health care and community settings. Workers usually work a 40-hour week.

In large rehabilitation centers, they may work in spacious rooms equipped with machines, tools, and other devices generating noise. The work can be tiring, because they are on their feet much of the time. Those providing home health care services may spend time driving from appointment to appointment. They also face hazards such as back strain from lifting and moving clients and equipment. These workers often become supervisors.

Stockbroker

Average Pay: \$69,200 per year

Education: Bachelor's degree

Job Description:

Assist investors – from individuals with a few hundred dollars to large institutions with millions to invest – to buy or sell stocks, bonds, and shares in mutual funds, insurance annuities, or other financial products. In addition, many clients seek out these agents for advice on investments, insurance, tax planning, estate planning, and other financial matters.

Skills:

Must be knowledgeable about economic conditions and trends. Employers seek applicants who have considerable sales ability, good interpersonal and communication skills, and a strong desire to succeed. Some employers also make sure that applicants have a good credit history and a clean criminal record. Self-confidence and an ability to handle frequent rejections are important ingredients for success.

Life on the Job:

Most agents work in offices under fairly stressful conditions. They have access to “quote boards” or computer terminals that continually provide information on the prices of securities. When sales activity increases, due perhaps to unanticipated changes in the economy, the pace can become very hectic.

Workers who have been doing the job for a while usually work a standard 40-hour week. Beginners who are seeking customers usually work longer hours. Most new workers spend a great deal of time learning the firm’s products and services and studying for exams in order to qualify to sell other products, such as insurance and commodities. Most accommodate customers by meeting with them in the evenings or on weekends.



Journalist

Average Pay: \$31,000-\$100,000 per year

Education: Bachelor's degree minimum

Job Description:

Gather information, prepare stories, and make broadcasts that inform people about local, State, national, and international events; present points of view on current issues; and report on the actions of public officials, corporate executives, interest groups, and others who exercise power.

Skills:

Must have excellent written and verbal communication skills. It is essential that they are able to listen carefully and critically analyze what they hear.

Life on the Job:

Should be dedicated to providing accurate and impartial news. Accuracy is important, both to serve the public and because untrue statements can lead to lawsuits. A nose for news, persistence, initiative, poise, resourcefulness, a good memory, and physical stamina are important, as is the emotional stability to deal with pressing deadlines, irregular hours, and dangerous assignments. Broadcast reporters and news analysts must be comfortable on camera. All reporters must be at ease in unfamiliar places and with a variety of people. Positions involving on-air work require a pleasant voice and appearance.



Judge

Average Pay: \$93,000-\$141,000 per year

Education: Bachelor's degree and law degree

Job Description:

Apply the law and supervise the legal process in courts according to local, State, and Federal statutes.

Skills:

Must have excellent written and verbal communication skills. It is essential that they are able to listen carefully and critically analyze what they hear.

Life on the Job:

Preside over court cases concerning every aspect of society, from traffic offenses to disputes over the management of professional sports to issues concerning the rights of huge corporations. They must ensure that trials and hearings are conducted fairly and that the court safeguards the legal rights of all parties involved.

They do most of their work in offices, law libraries, and courtrooms. Work in these occupations presents few hazards. Most wear robes when they are in a courtroom. They typically work a standard 40-hour week, but many work more than 50 hours per week.

Health Inspector

Average Pay: \$40,000-\$65,000 per year

Education: Associate degree; higher pay with bachelor's degree

Job Description:

Inspect businesses and public areas to ensure the safety of workers and the general public.

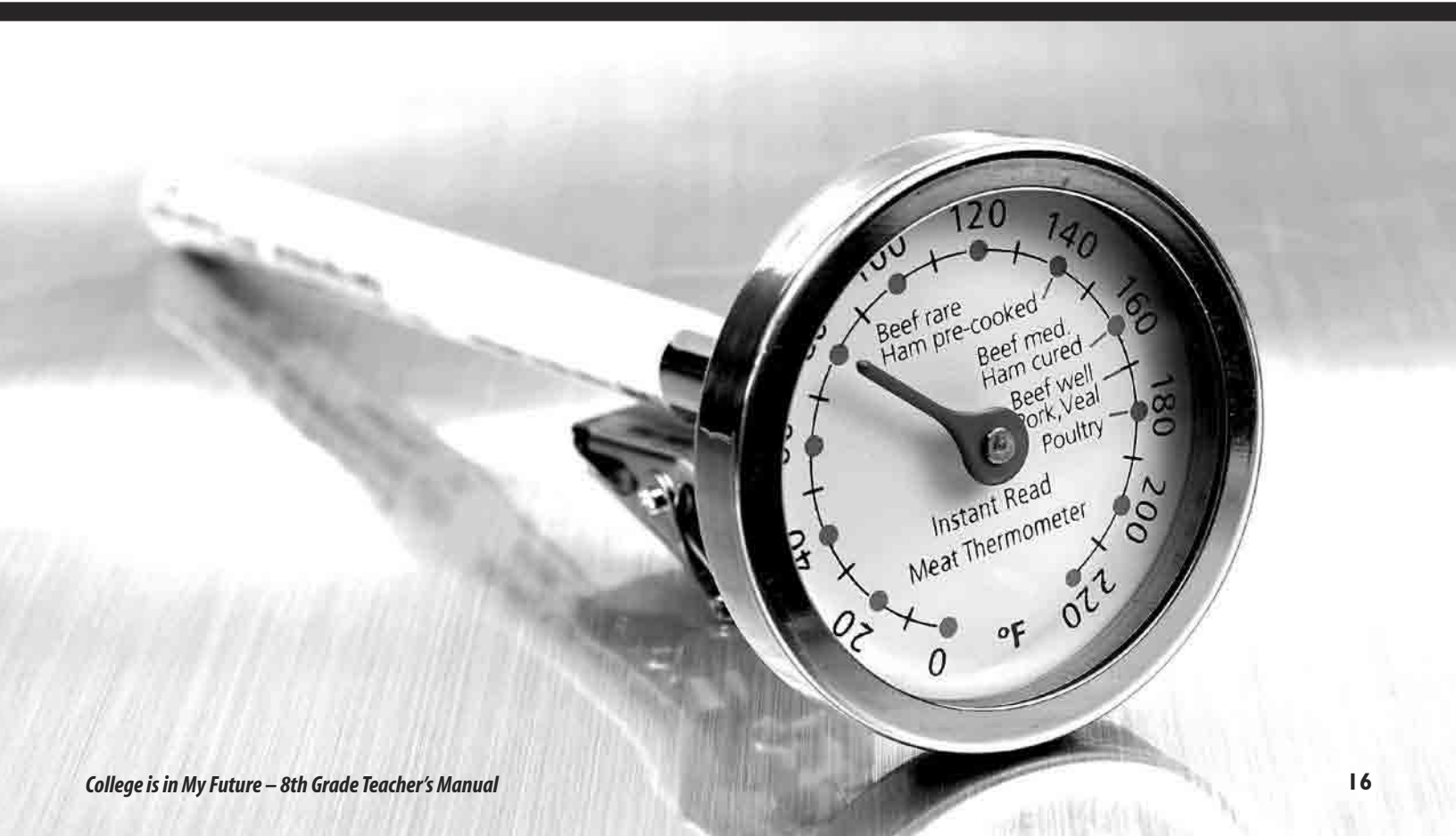
Skills:

In general, people who want to enter this occupation should be responsible, like detailed work and should be able to communicate well.

Life on the Job:

This occupation works with many different people in a variety of environments. Their jobs often involve considerable fieldwork; some travel frequently. Many occupational health and safety specialists and technicians work long and often irregular hours.

Occupational health and safety specialists and technicians may be exposed to many of the same physically strenuous conditions and hazards as industrial employees, and the work may be performed in unpleasant, stressful, and dangerous working conditions. They may find themselves in an adversarial role if the management of an organization disagrees with the recommendations for ensuring a safe working environment.





Engineer

Average Pay: \$45,000-\$100,000 per year

Education: Bachelor's degree; higher pay with a master's or doctorate

Job Description:

Apply the principles of science and mathematics to solve technical problems. Employment opportunities can be found in all aspects of industry ranging from manufacturing to construction. Specialties include aerospace, agricultural, biomedical, chemical, civil, electrical, environmental, mechanical and nuclear.

Skills:

Should be creative, inquisitive, analytical, and detail-oriented. Workers in this field should have the ability to work as part of a team and to communicate well, both orally and in writing. Communication abilities are important because these workers often interact with specialists in a wide range of fields.

Life on the Job:

Most work in office buildings, laboratories, or industrial plants. Others may spend time outdoors at construction sites and oil and gas exploration and production sites, where they monitor or direct operations or solve on-site problems. Some travel extensively to plants or worksites.

Most work a standard 40-hour week. At times, deadlines or design standards may bring extra pressure to a job, requiring them to work longer hours.

Editor

Average Pay: \$43,890

**Education: Bachelor's degree;
more job opportunities with a master's degree**

Job Description:

These workers review, rewrite, and edit the work of writers. They may also do original writing. Duties may include planning the content of books, technical journals, trade magazines, and other publications. They also decide what material will appeal to readers, review and edit drafts of books and articles, offer comments to improve the work, and suggest possible titles. In addition, they may oversee the production of the publications. In the book-publishing industry, the primary responsibility is to review proposals for books and decide whether to buy the publication rights from the author.

Skills:

Must be able to express ideas clearly and logically and should love to write. Creativity, curiosity, a broad range of knowledge, self-motivation, and perseverance also are valuable. They must demonstrate good judgment and a strong sense of ethics in deciding what material to publish. They need tact and the ability to guide and encourage others in their work. The ability to concentrate amid confusion and to work under pressure is essential. Familiarity with electronic publishing, graphics, and video production equipment increasingly is needed. Use of electronic and wireless communications equipment to send e-mail, transmit work, and review copy often is necessary. Online newspapers and magazines require knowledge of computer software used to combine online text with graphics, audio, video, and animation.

Life on the Job:

Some work in comfortable, private offices; others work in noisy rooms filled with the sound of keyboards and computer printers, as well as the voices of writers tracking down information over the telephone. They work any number of hours necessary to meet a deadline. As a result, they must be willing to work evenings, nights, or weekends to prepare for a publication deadline. Those who prepare morning or weekend publications and broadcasts also may regularly work nights and weekends.

Detective

Average Pay:
\$26,000-\$75,000 per year

Education: Bachelor's degree; higher pay and more opportunities with a master's degree

Job Description:

Gather facts and collect evidence for criminal cases. Some are assigned to task forces to combat specific types of crime. People depend on them to protect their lives and property.

Skills:

Personal characteristics such as honesty, sound judgment, integrity, and a sense of responsibility are especially important. Continuing training helps them to improve their job performance. Annual training is received in self-defense tactics, firearms, use-of-force policies, sensitivity and communications skills, crowd-control techniques, relevant legal developments, and advances in enforcement equipment.

Life on the Job:

They conduct interviews, examine records, observe the activities of suspects, and participate in raids or arrests. They usually specialize in investigating one of a wide variety of violations, such as homicide or fraud. They are assigned cases on a rotating basis and work on them until an arrest and conviction occurs or until the case is dropped.



Chemist

Average Pay: \$56,060

Education: Ph.D.; a few companies hire people with a master's degree or bachelor's degree

Job Description:

Everything in the environment, whether naturally occurring or of human design, is composed of chemicals. These scientists search for and use new knowledge about chemicals. Their research has led to the discovery and development of thousands of products. Research on the chemistry of living things spurs advances in medicine, agriculture, food processing, and other fields.

Skills:

Must have a good understanding of science and mathematics. Workers in this field should like working with their hands and performing laboratory experiments and computer modeling. Perseverance, curiosity, and the ability to concentrate on detail and to work independently are essential. Some understanding of other areas including business and marketing or economics, is desirable, along with leadership ability and good verbal and written communication skills.

Life on the Job:

They usually work regular hours in offices and laboratories. After a material is sold, some help customers tailor the material to suit their needs. Some do their work in chemical plants or outdoors—while gathering water samples to test for pollutants, for example. Some are exposed to health or safety hazards when handling certain chemicals, but there is little risk if proper procedures are followed.



Buyer

Average Pay:
\$54,000-\$94,000 per year
Education: Bachelor's degree

Job Description:

Shops for goods to be resold by a company in a store and attempts to determine which items consumers will like and buy.

Skills:

Purchasing professionals consider price, quality, availability, reliability, and technical support when choosing suppliers and merchandise. They try to get the best deal for their company, meaning the highest quality goods at the lowest possible cost to their companies. In order to accomplish these tasks successfully, they study sales records and inventory levels of current stock, identify foreign and domestic suppliers, and watch for changes affecting the supply of, and demand for products and materials.

Life on the Job:

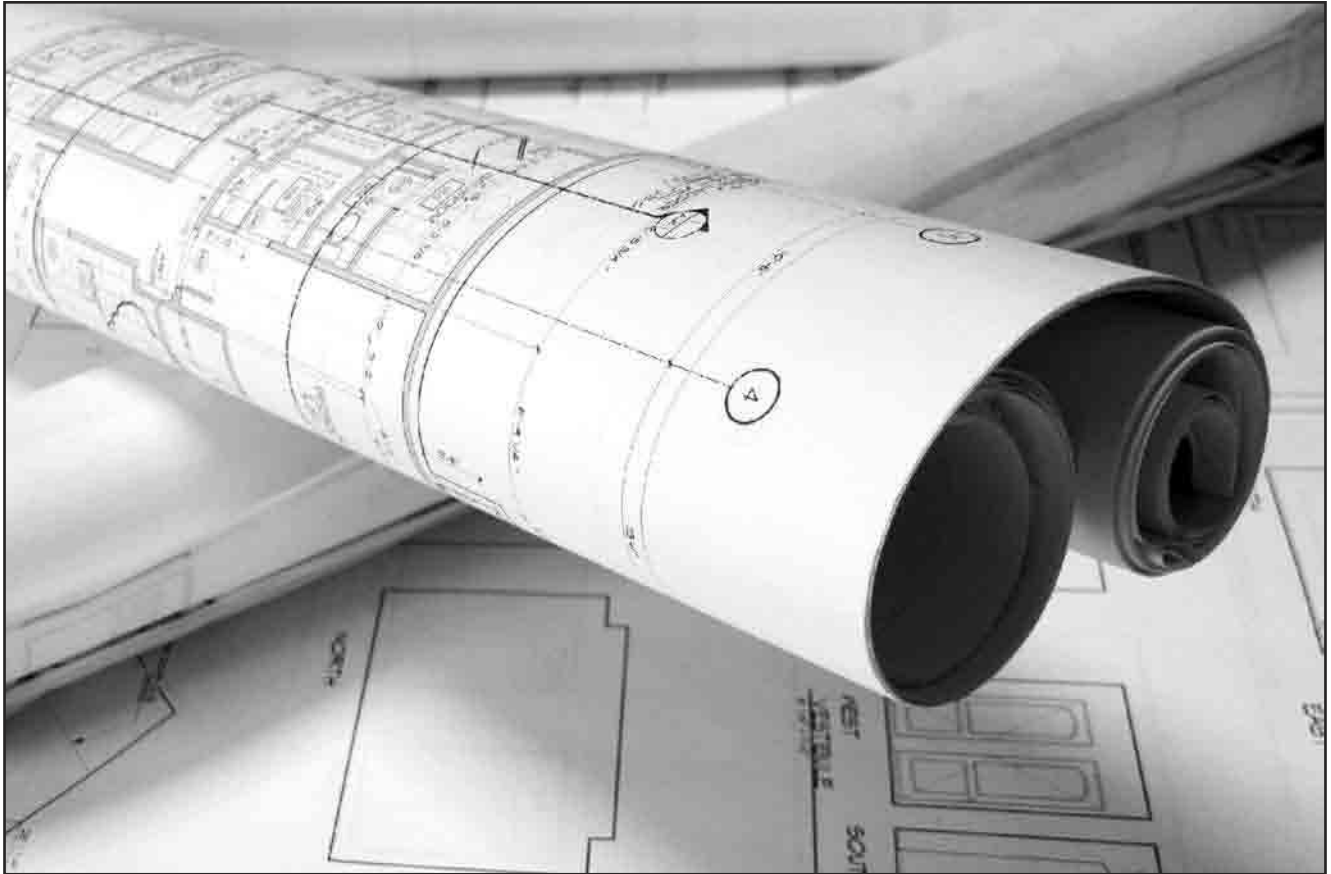
Most work is done in comfortable offices. They frequently work more than the standard 40-hour week because of special sales, conferences, or production deadlines. They often work under great pressure. Because wholesale and retail stores are so competitive, they need physical stamina to keep up with the fast-paced nature of their work. Many travel at least several days a month, often outside the United States.



Architect

Average Pay: \$57,000-\$100,000 per year

Education: Bachelor's degree , master's degree, and professional license



Job Description:

Design the look of buildings and ensure they are safe to live in and use.

Skills:

Must be able to communicate their ideas visually to their clients. Artistic and drawing ability is helpful, but not essential. Good communication skills, the ability to work independently or as part of a team, and creativity are important qualities. Computer skills also are required for writing specifications, for two- and three-dimensional drafting, and for financial management.

Life on the Job:

This occupation usually works in a comfortable environment. Most of their time is spent in offices talking with clients, developing reports and drawings and working. However, they often visit construction sites to review the progress of projects. Although most work approximately 40 hours per week, they sometimes have to work nights and weekends to meet deadlines.

Hydrologist

Average Pay:
\$40,000-\$85,000 per year

Education: Bachelor's degree;
higher pay and more job opportunities
with a master's degree

Job Description:

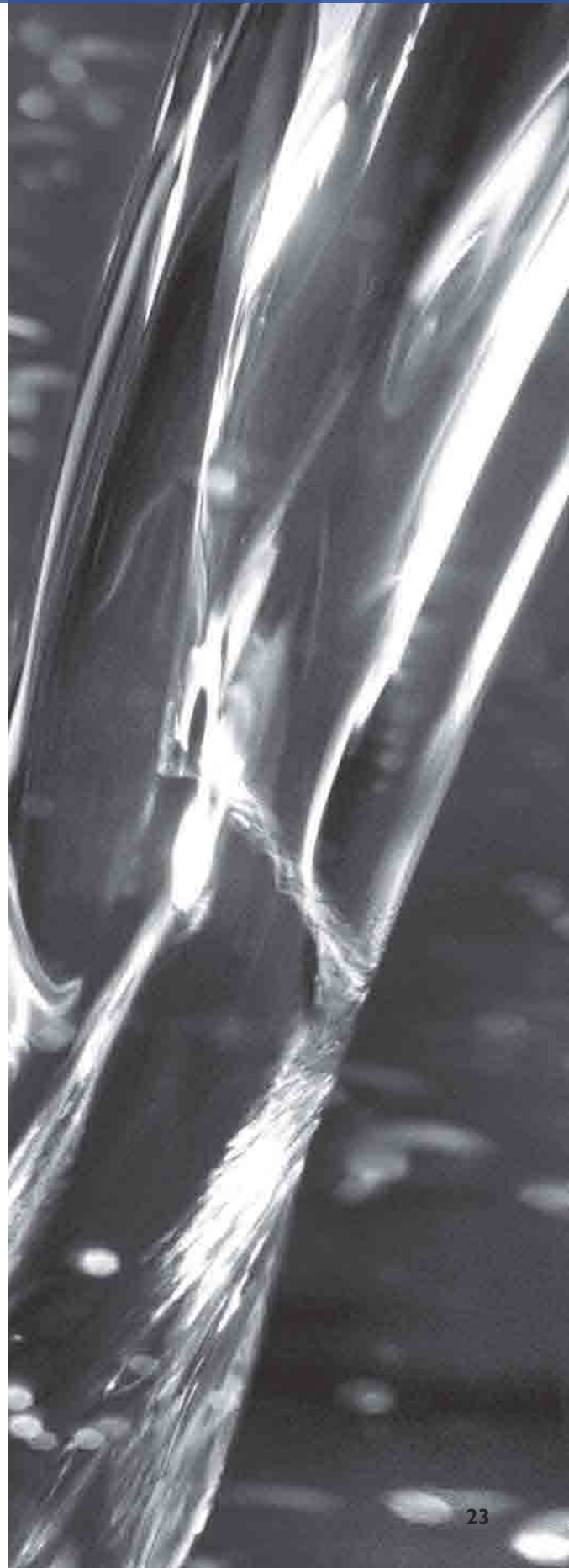
Study the quantity, distribution, circulation, and physical properties of underground and surface waters.

Skills:

Must have excellent communication skills, because they usually work as part of a team with other scientists, engineers, and technicians. Strong oral and written communication skills also are essential, because writing technical reports and research proposals and communicating technical and research results to company managers, regulators, and the public are important aspects of the work.

Life on the Job:

Most entry-level workers spend the majority of their time in the field, while more experienced workers generally devote more of their time to office or laboratory work. Many beginning workers often take field trips that involve physical activity. Field work may involve working in warm or cold climates, in all kinds of weather. In their research, they may dig or chip with a hammer, scoop with a net, come in contact with water, and carry equipment in a backpack. Travel often is required to meet with prospective clients or investors. Those in laboratories may conduct tests, run experiments, record results, and compile data.



Public Relations Consultant

Average Pay: \$43,000 per year

Education: Bachelor's degree

Job Description:

Provide information to the public and media such as television and newspapers, on behalf of companies, government organizations, nonprofit groups and individuals such as celebrities and professional athletes.

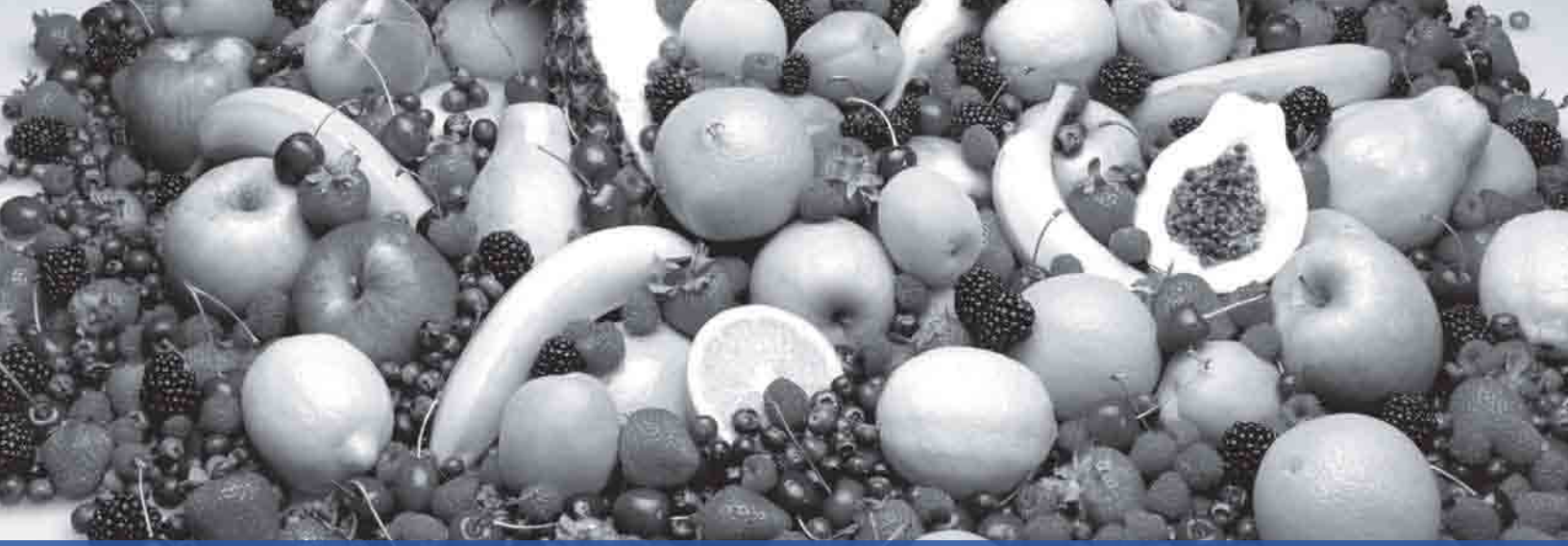
Skills:

Must have excellent written and verbal communication skills.

Life on the Job:

Some work a standard 35- to 40-hour week, but unpaid overtime is common. Occasionally, they must be at the job or on call around the clock, especially if there is an emergency or crisis. Their offices are busy places; work schedules can be irregular and frequently interrupted. Schedules often have to be rearranged so that workers can meet deadlines, deliver speeches, attend meetings and community activities, and travel.





Nutritionist

Average Pay: \$63,760 per year

Education: Bachelor of science degree

Job Description:

Plan food and nutrition programs and supervise the preparation and serving of meals. They help to prevent and treat illnesses by promoting healthy eating habits and recommending dietary changes, such as the use of less salt for those with high blood pressure or the reduction of fat and sugar intake for those who are overweight.

Skills:

Good communication skills are necessary in order to communicate with clients. Interested high school students should take courses in biology, chemistry, mathematics, health, and communications.

Life on the Job:

Most work full-time and work a regular 40-hour week, although some work weekends. About 1 in 4 worked part-time in 2004. They usually work in clean, well-lighted, and well-ventilated areas. However, some work in warm, congested kitchens. Many are on their feet for much of the workday.

Computer Software Designer

Average Pay: \$59,130 per year

Education: Bachelor of science degree

Job Description:

Design, develop and test the software and systems that enable computers to perform their many applications using the principles and techniques of computer science, engineering, and mathematics.

Skills:

Must have strong problem-solving and analytical skills. They also must be able to communicate effectively with team members, other staff, and the customers they meet. Because they often deal with a number of tasks simultaneously, they must be able to concentrate and pay close attention to detail.

Life on the Job:

These workers normally work in well-lighted and comfortable offices or laboratories in which computer equipment is located. Most work at least 40 hours a week; however, they also may have to work evenings or weekends to finish projects or solve unexpected technical problems.

As they try to improve computers for users, they interact with customers and co-workers. Some spend much of their time away from their offices, frequently traveling overnight to meet with customers. They call on customers in businesses ranging from manufacturing plants to financial institutions. As networks expand, these workers use modems, laptops, e-mail, and the Internet to provide more technical support and other services from their main office, connecting to a customer's computer remotely to identify and correct developing problems.

Social Worker

Average Pay: \$57,860 per year

Education: Bachelor's degree

Job Description:

A profession for those with a strong desire to help improve people's lives. These workers help people function the best way they can in their environment, deal with their relationships, and solve personal and family problems. They often see clients who face a life-threatening disease or a social problem, such as inadequate housing, unemployment, a serious illness, a disability, or substance abuse. They also assist families that have serious domestic conflicts, sometimes involving child or spousal abuse.

Skills:

Must be emotionally mature, objective, and sensitive to people and their problems. They must be able to handle responsibility, work independently, and maintain good working relationships with clients and coworkers.

Life on the Job:

Usually work a standard 40-hour week; however, some occasionally work evenings and weekends to meet with clients, attend community meetings, and handle emergencies. Some, particularly in voluntary nonprofit agencies, work part-time. They usually spend most of their time in an office or residential facility, but also may travel locally to visit clients, meet with service providers, or attend meetings. The work, while satisfying, can be emotionally draining. Understaffing and large caseloads add to the pressure in some agencies. To tend to patient care or client needs, many hospitals and long-term care facilities are employing these workers on teams with a broad mix of occupations, including clinical specialists, registered nurses, and health aides.





CEO

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Average Pay: \$77,420 per year

Education: Requirement varies from bachelor's degree to doctorate, depending on company

Job Description:

All organizations have specific goals and objectives that they strive to meet. These workers devise strategies and formulate policies to ensure that these objectives are met. They formulate policies and direct the operations of businesses and corporations, public sector organizations, nonprofit institutions, and other organizations.

Skills:

Must have excellent personal skills. An analytical mind able to quickly assess large amounts of information and data is very important, as is the ability to evaluate the relationships between numerous factors. They also must be able to communicate clearly and persuasively. Other critical qualities include leadership, self-confidence, motivation, decisiveness, flexibility, sound business judgment, and determination.

Life on the Job:

They typically have spacious offices and numerous support staff. Long hours (including evenings and weekends) are standard for most, but their schedules may be flexible. Substantial travel between international, national, regional, and local offices to monitor operations and meet with customers, staff, and other executives often is required of managers and executives. Many also attend meetings and conferences sponsored by various associations. They are under intense pressure to succeed; depending on the organization, this may mean earning higher profits, providing better service, or attaining fundraising and charitable goals. Those in charge of poorly performing organizations or departments usually find their jobs in jeopardy.

Housekeeper

Average Pay: \$18,700 per year

Education: High School Diploma preferred but not required

Job Description:

These workers perform any combination of light cleaning duties to keep private households or commercial establishments, such as office buildings, hotels, restaurants, hospitals, and nursing homes, clean and orderly. In hotels, aside from cleaning and maintaining the premises, they may deliver ironing boards, cribs, and rollaway beds to guests' rooms. In hospitals, they also may wash bed frames, make beds, and disinfect and sanitize equipment and supplies with germicides.

Skills:

Employers usually look for dependable, hard-working individuals who are in good health, follow directions well, and get along with other people. Workers should be able to perform simple arithmetic and follow instructions. Beginners usually work with an experienced cleaner, doing routine cleaning. As they gain more experience, they are assigned more complicated tasks. Those who come in contact with the public should have good communication skills.



Life on the Job:

Because most office buildings are cleaned while they are empty, many work evening hours. Some, such as those who work in hotels and hospitals, work in the daytime and often must work weekends. These workers spend most of their time on their feet, sometimes lifting or pushing heavy furniture or equipment. Many tasks, such as dusting or sweeping, require constant bending, stooping, and stretching. Lifting can cause back injuries and sprains.

Most work indoors, but some work outdoors part of the time, sweeping walkways, mowing lawns, or shoveling snow. Working with machines can be noisy, and some tasks, such as cleaning bathrooms and trash rooms, can be dirty and unpleasant. Improved building materials, chemical cleaners, and power equipment have made many tasks easier and less time consuming. However, many workers leave these jobs because they provide low pay and few benefits, limited opportunities for training or advancement, and often only part-time or temporary work.

Department Salesperson

Average Pay: \$15,960

Education: High School Diploma

Job Description:

Assist customers in finding what they are looking for and try to interest them in buying the merchandise. Most are able to describe a product's features, demonstrate its use, or show various models and colors. In addition, most also act as clerks. They may receive cash, checks, debit and charge payments; bag or package purchases; and give change and receipts. They also may handle returns and exchanges of merchandise, wrap gifts, and keep their work areas neat. In addition, they may help stock shelves or racks, arrange for mailing or delivery of purchases, mark price tags, take inventory, and prepare displays.

Skills:

The training for these positions is received on the job. Employers look for people who enjoy working with others and who have the tact and patience to deal with difficult customers. Among desirable characteristics are an interest in sales work, a neat appearance, and the ability to communicate clearly and effectively. The ability to speak more than one language may be helpful for employment in communities where people from various cultures live and shop. Before hiring, some employers may conduct a background check, especially for a job selling high-priced items.



Life on the Job: These employees work in clean, comfortable, well-lit stores. However, they often stand for long periods and may need supervisory approval to leave the sales floor. Often a large part of their earnings is based on commission, which is a percentage of the sales they make. Most work evenings and weekends, particularly during sales and other peak retail periods. The end-of-year holiday season is the busiest time for most retailers. As a result, many employers do not allow employees to take time off during holiday periods. Many stores employ only part-time workers and therefore do not offer benefits such as health insurance or paid vacation.



Fast Food Worker

Average Pay: \$7.77 per hour

Education: High School Diploma preferred but not required

Job Description:

At various times during a work shift, duties may include taking and inputting customer's food orders; preparing the food and placing it in disposable containers; collecting payment for the food ordered and cleaning the kitchen and dining areas.

Skills:

Employees should have a neat appearance and maintain a professional and pleasant manner. Professional hospitality is required from the moment guests enter the restaurant until the time they leave. On-the-job training, typically under the close supervision of an experienced employee or manager, often lasts a few weeks or less. Some large chain operations require formal training sessions for new employees, many using on-line or video training programs. This type of corporate training generally covers the restaurant's history, menu, organizational philosophy, and daily operational standards.

Life on the Job:

Workers spend most of their time on their feet—preparing meals, taking orders, or transporting dishes and supplies throughout the establishment. Work during peak dining hours can be very hectic and stressful. Much of the work involves dealing with customers and sustaining a professional and pleasant manner during busy times or over the course of a long shift may be difficult.

Typical establishments have well-designed kitchens with state-of-the-art cooking and refrigeration equipment and proper electrical, lighting, and ventilation systems to keep everything functioning. However, kitchens usually are noisy. Dining areas also may be well-designed, but can become crowded and noisy when busy.

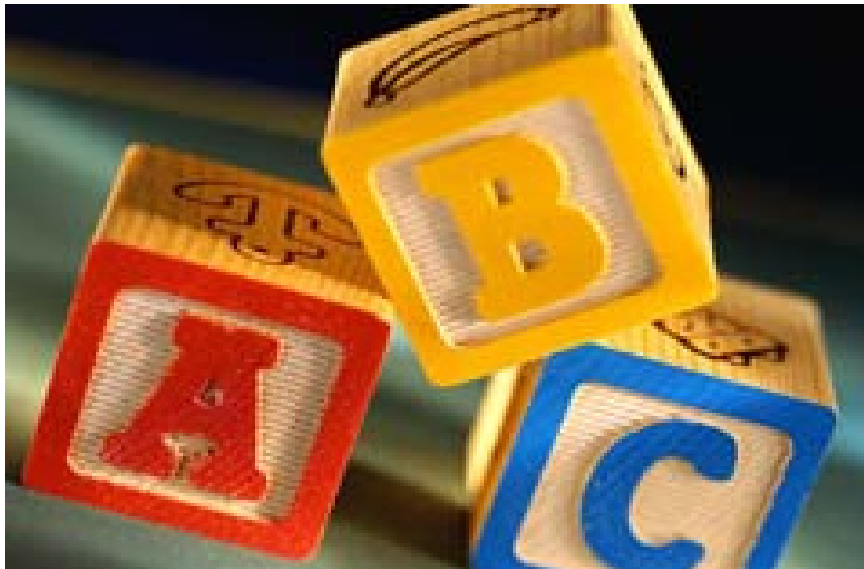
Many establishments in this industry are open long hours. Staff typically is needed to work during evening, weekend, and holiday hours. Work is often only available part-time which may also limit available benefits such as vacation and sick pay, medical insurance, etc. A number of employers provide free or discounted meals and uniforms to their employees.

Child Care Provider

Average Pay: \$16,320 per year

Education: High School Diploma

Some states require a national Child Development Associate (CDA) credential, community college courses or an Associate's degree in child development or early childhood education.



Job Description:

Nurture and care for young people who have not yet entered school and also supervise older children before and after school.

Skills:

This work requires patience; creativity; an ability to nurture, motivate, teach, and influence children; and leadership, organizational, and administrative skills. Workers must anticipate and prevent problems, deal with disruptive children, provide fair but firm discipline, and be enthusiastic and constantly alert. They must communicate effectively with the children and their parents, as well as with teachers and other child care workers. Workers should be mature, patient, understanding, and articulate and have energy and physical stamina.

Life on the Job:

The work is sometimes routine but new activities and challenges mark each day. The job can be physically and emotionally taxing, as workers constantly stand, walk, bend, stoop, and lift to attend to each child's interests and problems. The work hours vary widely. The centers usually are open year round, with long hours so that parents can drop off and pick up their children before and after work. Some workers are unable to take regular breaks during the day due to limited staffing. Without additional education, there is generally little opportunity for advancement.



Receptionist

Average Pay: \$11.01 per hour

Education: High School Diploma

Job Description:

These workers are charged with a responsibility that may affect the success of an organization: making a good first impression. They answer telephones, route and screen calls, greet visitors, respond to inquiries from the public, and provide information about the organization.

Skills:

Good interpersonal and customer service skills—being courteous, professional, and helpful—are critical for this job. Being an active listener is a key quality that requires the ability to listen patiently to the points being made, to wait to speak until others have finished, and to ask appropriate questions when necessary. In addition, the ability to relay information accurately to others is important. Employers often look for applicants who already possess certain skills, such as prior computer experience or experience answering multi-line telephones. Some employers also may prefer some formal office education or training.

Life on the Job:

These workers usually work in areas that are highly visible and designed and furnished to make a good impression to customers. Most work stations are clean, well lighted, and relatively quiet. The work performed by some of these employees may be tiring, repetitious, and stressful as they may spend all day answering continuously ringing telephones and sometimes encounter difficult or irate callers. The work environment, however, may be very friendly and motivating for individuals who enjoy greeting customers face to face and making them feel comfortable.

They generally use multi-line telephone systems, personal computers, and fax machines. When they are not busy with callers, most workers are expected to perform a variety of office duties, including opening and sorting mail, collecting and distributing parcels, and transmitting and delivering facsimiles. Other duties include updating appointment calendars, preparing travel vouchers, and performing basic bookkeeping, word processing, and filing.