

Activity 6: Comparing Careers

FOR THE TEACHER

Introduction

The purpose of this activity is to help students understand which criteria are important to them as they make career decisions and why. In a side-by-side comparison of two career options, students evaluate their interest in each career based on the following criteria: work tasks, working conditions, potential earnings, and education and training requirements. At each stage, students are asked to choose between the two occupations based on the information available to them and reflect on why they have made that choice.

At the end of the activity, students are asked to interpret the changes in their career choices and prioritize which of the criteria are most important to them at this stage of the career decision-making process. They are also encouraged to reflect on other possible factors that may influence their career choice and to project how their priorities may change as a result. Ultimately, students learn that career choices are not usually made on the basis of a single criterion, but instead, are influenced by multiple factors that constantly need to be re-evaluated as they gain more knowledge about career options and the decision-making process.

Setting the Stage

Classroom discussion can focus on the decision-making process and the factors that influence the types of decisions that students make. Introduce the subject by asking students to identify factors that influence their everyday decisions, such as what to wear. Ask students about some more important decisions that they have made or are in the process of making, such as which courses to select for the following year, and how and why the factors that influence those decisions could change.

Note: We recommend that students keep two browser windows (or tabs) open when gathering the information for the side-by-side comparison. Opening each career profile in a separate window or tab will help students move through this activity more efficiently and effectively.

Starting the Program

Go to www.careercruising.com. Enter your personal My Plan username and password in the spaces provided, and click on **Log In**.

Worksheet 6: Comparing Careers

Log in to Career Cruising and click on **Careers**. Use the **Keyword Search** to find two occupations that interest you but that you may not know much about. Write the names of the careers in the spaces provided at the top of every worksheet in this activity.

Career One

Career Two

If you had to pick one of these careers based only on what you think you know about them right now, which would you choose and why?

1. Click on Job Description in each career profile. Answer the following questions:

What do people in these careers do? (Describe at least three typical work tasks for each career.)

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

If you had to pick one of these careers based only on the tasks that you would perform, which would you choose and why?

2. Click on Working Conditions in each career profile. Answer the following questions:

What are the working conditions like for people in these careers? (*e.g., typical hours, location, frequent travel, etc.*)

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

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If you had to pick one of these careers based only on the working conditions that you described, which would you choose and why?

3. Click on Earnings in each career profile. Answer the following questions:

How much do people in each career typically earn on a yearly basis? (If annual salary figures aren't available, how much do they earn per hour or per contract?)

What other kinds of compensation or benefits can people in each career receive? (e.g., *health and dental benefits, contributions to retirement savings plans, performance bonuses, etc.*)

If you had to pick one of these careers based only on how much you could earn, which would you choose and why?

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4. Click on Education in each career profile. Answer the following questions:

What are the education and training requirements for people in each career? (*e.g., high school diploma, associate or bachelor's degree, apprenticeship, on-the-job training, additional licensing or certification, etc.*)

Approximately how many years of training or education are required for people in each occupation?

If you had to pick one of these careers based only on the amount of education and training you need, which would you choose and why?

SUMMARY – YOUR VIEWS

5. Now that you have evaluated your interest in these two careers based on work tasks, working conditions, potential earnings, and education and training requirements, answer the following questions:

Did you change your mind about the career you chose at the beginning of the activity as different types of information became available to you? What new information caused you to change your mind and why?

Worksheet 6: Comparing Careers

Which of the criteria that you used to compare your career choices is most important to you and which is the least important? Rank them in order from **1 (the most important)** to **4 (the least important)** and explain why you have ranked them that way:

Criteria	Rank	Why
Work Tasks:	_____	_____ _____
Working Conditions:	_____	_____ _____
Earnings:	_____	_____ _____
Education & Training:	_____	_____ _____

What other factors may influence your career decision? (*e.g., parents, favorite school subject, job outlook, etc.*) Do you consider any of them to be more important than the ones you ranked above? Why?
