

# College Readiness Curriculum

## Lesson 3

### Choosing an Area of Study or Career Trajectory

#### **Lesson Overview:**

Students will continue the College Readiness Curriculum by completing the following steps: 1) identifying education and career paths that interest them 2) researching careers that interest them 3) setting a SMART goal to advance their career research

This curriculum is part of STEM U  
Sponsored by



## College Readiness

### Lesson 3 – Choosing an Area of Study or Career Trajectory

#### Lesson Overview:

During this lesson, you will guide students to identify and researching courses of study and careers that interest them.

#### Time Frame:

1-2 hours

#### Core Concepts:

- Exploring careers that may interest them can help students narrow their choices.
- Researching career requirements can help students choose appropriate courses and activities, now and during post-secondary education.

#### Learning Objectives

In this lesson, students will:

- Identify education paths and career paths that interest them.
- Research online to learn more about specific careers that interest them.
- Set a SMART Goal to advance their career research.

#### Materials Needed

- Online career survey
- Career Research Worksheet
- Note paper and pens

#### **Step 1: Introduce the Lesson**

Explain to students that in this lesson they will be identifying and exploring careers that interest them. Assure students that they need not make final career decisions now, but explain that researching fields

and career paths that interest them can help students to narrow their choices and make focused decisions about courses and activities to enroll in now and during college.

### **Step 2: Activate Background Knowledge/Ideas**

Most likely, many students already have ideas about careers they hope to pursue. Invite a few volunteers to share their career aspirations. Ask questions such as the following:

- What do you already know about this career?
- Do you know anyone who works in this field?
- What, if anything, are you doing now to prepare?

You might invite students to jot down notes about their current career ideas/knowledge and then ask them to return their notes at the end of the lesson and see whether their thinking has changed.

### **Step 3: Invite Students to Take an Online Survey**

Explain that an online survey is one of the first (and most fun and engaging) places students might start their career explorations. Explain that the survey will ask questions about students' skills and interests, then produce a list of career options that might be good fits. Point out that sometimes the results are surprising, but assure students that if the results from one survey do not seem like a good fit, students can try another one. Different surveys may work better for different personalities.

Provide students with the following list of surveys and assessments to choose from and point out that they may research and locate alternative surveys if they wish:

[Career Cluster Interest Survey](#)  
[CAREERwise Interest Assessment](#)  
[Education Planner Career Cluster Activity](#)  
[Which Careers Match Your Skills?](#)  
[Find Future Career Quiz](#)

You might also ask whether anyone has already taken a career interest survey:

- Did the results surprise you? Why/why not?
- Would you recommend the survey to the class?

Allow 20–30 minutes for students to complete one or two online surveys of their choice, or assign this activity to be completed outside the classroom, as homework.

**Step 4: Discuss Survey Results**

Invite students to spend about 15 minutes discussing their survey results with partners or small groups. Suggest that students discuss the following:

- Which results surprised you the most? Which did you most expect? Explain.
- Which results were most and least appealing to you? Why?
- Which careers will you investigate further?

Circulate as students discuss, offering comments as appropriate. Schedule brief meetings with any students who have questions or concerns they wish to discuss further.

**Step 5: Explore Options**

Distribute the Career Research Worksheet. In class, or as homework, encourage students to conduct further research into 2–4 career options that interest them most. Share the following links to career-related websites. Point out that students might also find useful information by entering the name of a job or career, plus one or more additional search terms, such as “salary,” “education,” “information,” or “statistics.”

**General Career Information Websites**

[Education Planner Career Search](#)

[Find Your Future](#)

[Career Cornerstone Center](#)

**Career Information by Country**

[include or delete as appropriate for your students]

[National Careers Service \(UK\)](#)

[US Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)

[National Career Service \(India\)](#)

[Malaysia Career Guide](#)

[PayScale \(South Africa\)](#)

[MiSalario.org \(Mexico\)](#)

[Observatorio Laboral \(Mexico\)](#)

As their research gets underway, invite students to share other useful sites they find.

**Step 6: Discuss Research Results**

When students have completed the Career Research Worksheet, schedule a few minutes to meet with each student and review her or his worksheet, answering any questions students may have and guiding them to complete additional research as necessary. Use also the following questions to help guide discussion:

- Does you have additional information to share with students about their interests? (In many cases, you probably will not.)
- Do you know anyone in the career or field the student is considering who might be willing to share information, by email or in person?
- What other related careers or jobs would you suggest students look into?

Ask students to revise and update their worksheets according to your feedback and any additional research they do.

### **Spotlight On: Unexpected Intersections – Careers That Merge Seemingly Unrelated Skills and Interests**

Are students struggling to find career options that encompass seemingly disparate skills and interests? Share the following ideas, as a slide or on a handout:

As you explore different career options, think creatively. If you have two or more interests or skill sets that seem unrelated, consider how they might merge into one career. Consider [Yuly Fuentes Medel](#), the Founder and CEO of [Descience](#), a company that merges science, technology and fashion.

If you have a passion for sports and want to study medicine or biology, you may check out a career in sports medicine or biomechanics. Are you intrigued by an area of science and you also love to write? Maybe you should consider a career in science writing. You can learn more in the Communication Module! Many amazing educators start out by studying what they are passionate about and then continue on to teaching, because they want to share their passion. Technology is becoming more and more ingrained in every aspect of our lives, so it is likely that a technological career exists or will exist in an area that fits your interests.

Your own creativity may play a role, as well. The career that merges your personal interests may not exist just yet. Perhaps your own vision and tenacity can create the perfect job for you.

Invite volunteers to share their own thoughts about two or more skills and/or interests they hope to combine in their careers. Make time later to follow up and ask students to share career options they found that match their unusual skill/interest combinations.

**Step 7: Set SMART Career Research Goal**  
**(15 Minutes)**

Review with students how to set a SMART Goal (Lesson 1). Then direct each student to set a new SMART goal that will help him or her get closer to choosing an area of study or career path to pursue.

Post the SMART criteria and have partners **Think-Pair-Share** to review their goals and revise the goals as necessary, making sure each goal meets the criteria:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Relevant
- Time bound

Circulate as partners Think-Pair-Share, offering comments and advice as necessary and responding to any questions or concerns students may have about their goals.

**Resources**

There are many ways for students to learn more about careers that might interest them. Share the following ideas as a slide or handout, or by posting them in classroom.

- Informational Interviews – talk to people who have studied what you might want to study or whose careers/jobs interest you.
- Attending talks and reading about subjects that interest you
- Internships and volunteer opportunities in your field of interest
- Summer study programs and afterschool clubs/activities in your area of interest
- School Guidance Counselor and teachers
- Parents and parents' friends – Talk to anyone that you might know!
- Look for job postings and job descriptions at companies that interest you. Job postings often include information about salary, responsibilities, and required education.