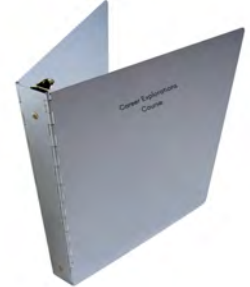


CAREER EXPLORATIONS

A Four Week Career Exploration Course



To help this course work better for you, we would suggest that you create a three ring binder dedicated to career exploration and include all of the tests and worksheets that you will complete as you work through the course.

WEEK ONE

Career Explorations - How to Choose a Career

Getting to work...sure that's what Americans do once they finish school. Yet, finding a job that allows you to enjoy each day can make all the difference. Making an informed career choice now is the best thing that you can do for your future. The first steps toward that decision are amazingly simple. In fact they boil down to three main points: explore yourself, explore your options, make an informed decision.

Now it's time to take the first step!

Understanding Your Options

The grim job market and the rising tide of student debt has many homeschooled high schoolers reeling with the question of their future. Many homeschoolers are choosing paths "less traveled" these days by incorporating alternative methods of education and experience. It's always encouraging to see the entrepreneurial spirit of the homeschooler come through in amazing ways. Taking the initiative to create your own career path by becoming anything from an herbalist to a personal trainer means that you can follow your passions!



To get a better understanding of how to choose a career, compare it to your eyesight. Often we miss important facts or events simply because we didn't see them. Many times, simply wearing glasses can change our viewpoint. The same applies to choosing a career. If you have the right "lenses" by which to see your options - the right choice becomes clear.

The Holland Career Assessment Approach

A great set of lenses to help you see career choice in a better light comes from John L. Holland. He is responsible for researching and developing the six work environment types and six personality types. According



to John L. Holland, if you can match the work environment type to your personality you have a greater chance for success and satisfaction in your career. Holland's personality types are often referred to as Holland codes or RIASEC: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising and conventional. Many of the career tests and career help websites will use these codes to help you find your match.

Here is a summary of the six personality and work environment types based on Holland's research:

- 1. Realistic (Do-er)** – Prefers physical activities that require skill, strength, and coordination. Traits include genuine, stable, conforming, and practical. Example professions include architect, farmer, and engineer.
- 2. Investigative (Thinker)** – Prefers working with theory and information, thinking, organizing, and understanding. Traits include: analytical, curious, and independent. Example professions include lawyer, mathematician, and professor.
- 3. Artistic (Creator)** – Prefers creative, original, and unsystematic activities that allow creative expression. Traits include: imaginative, disorderly, idealistic, emotional, and impractical. Example professions include: artist, musician, and writer.
- 4. Social (Helper)** – Prefers activities that involve helping, healing, or developing others. Traits include cooperative, friendly, sociable, and understanding. Example professions include counselor, doctor, and teacher.
- 5. Enterprising (Persuader)** – Prefers competitive environments, leadership, influence, selling, and status. Traits include ambitious, domineering, energetic, and self-confident. Example professions include Management, Marketing, and Sales Person.
- 6. Conventional (Organizer)** – Prefers precise, rule-regulated, orderly, and unambiguous activities. Traits include conforming, efficient, practical, unimaginative, and inflexible. Example professions include accountant, clerk and editor.

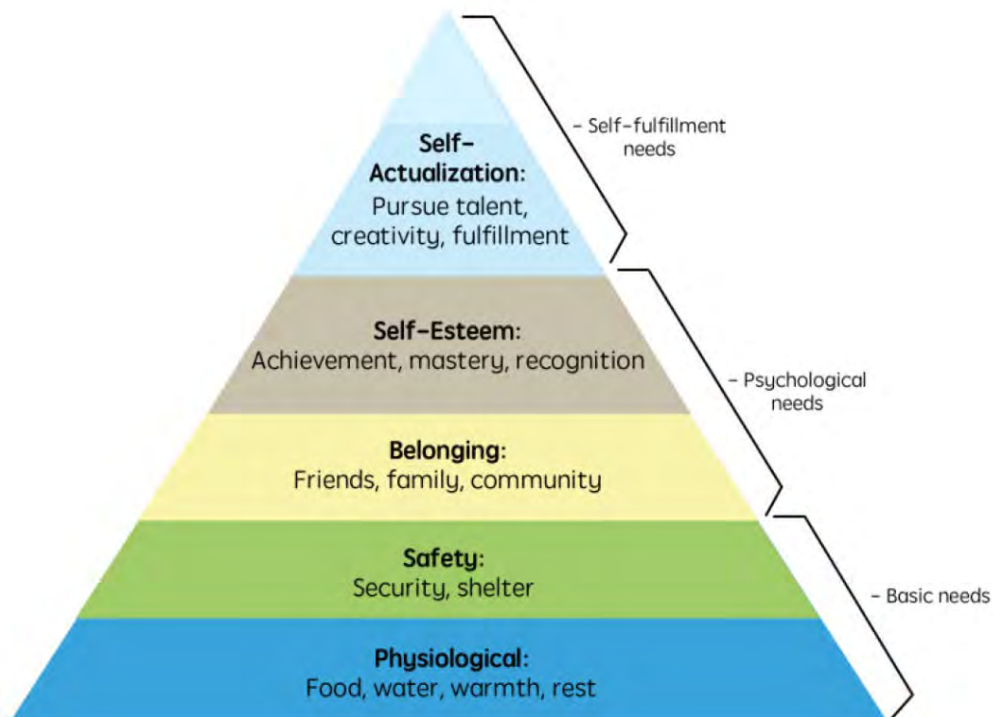
Assignment

As you read through these personality traits and the work environments that accompany them, you probably saw yourself in at least one of them. Now it's time to find out how YOU come out via Holland's Code... visit and print this [online quiz](#). Add your results to your binder.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Holland wasn't alone in his studies of career, personality, and satisfaction. Others have studied this too. One of those that might really apply to a homeschool highschooler is Maslow's theory. Maslow felt that people had to have their basic needs met to be satisfied, and we all know that satisfaction is what keeps us motivated, and motivation is what keeps us going to work each day! This is definitely something that can be used as a filter by which you review your options.

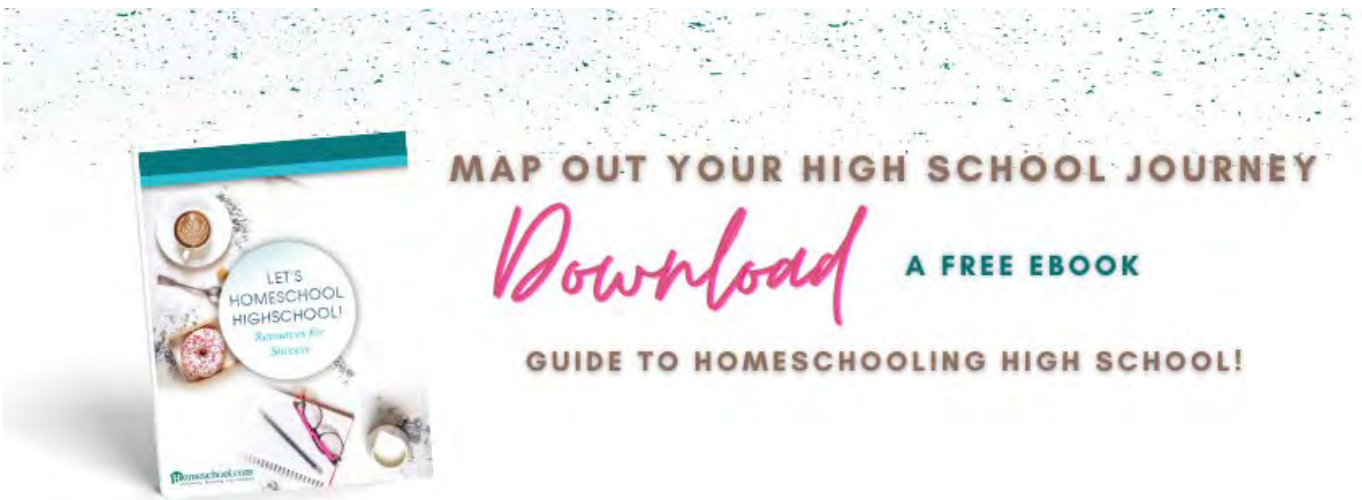
Career exploration is all about asking yourself questions, lots of questions. One such question would be, "Does this career satisfy my basic need to _____?" We all know that everyone has basic needs. These needs can often be as simple as thirst, hunger, being hot, or being cold, and once these are met we as humans have other basic needs that arise. In finding the right career, there are a whole new set of needs that will give way to an individual's feeling of fulfillment. Basically, Maslow believed that the lower "needs" had to be met before self-actualization or fulfillment could take place. So, have you thought about those things that you need to enable your career to be fulfilling?



One of the best ways to discover those seldom explored intimate facts about ourselves is to ask a close friend. You know, those friends that you know will tell you the truth even if it does hurt. Ask them to tell you what they think you “need” in a career. While you are at it, ask them what they think your outstanding skills and strengths are. You might be incredibly surprised at the observations of those who are closest to you. Taking into consideration the insight of your friends and family will give you a greater idea of the big picture.

Assignment

Write a short essay that inventories your particular skills and strengths, and explain how a person’s needs will affect their satisfaction with their career. Add this essay to your binder.



The advertisement features a white background with a light green confetti pattern. On the left is a book cover titled "LET'S HOMESCHOOL HIGH SCHOOL! Resources for Success" with a teal spine and various icons like a coffee cup, donut, and glasses. To the right, the text reads: "MAP OUT YOUR HIGH SCHOOL JOURNEY" in brown, "Download" in large pink script, "A FREE EBOOK" in teal, and "GUIDE TO HOMESCHOOLING HIGH SCHOOL!" in brown.

Click the image to download your free ebook guide.

WEEK TWO

Career Explorations - Understanding Yourself Better

Personal Inventories

As you begin the adventure of exploring the career that is right for you, it is important to understand yourself better in the process. Do you know what it is that you are passionate about? Do you know what type of personality you have? Do you have any idea what type of career might interest you? If you haven't found these things out about yourself already in the previous exercises, now is a great time to figure it out. There are a lot of amazing resources that will help you find the answers to these questions and more. Start understanding yourself better right now by taking the time to evaluate yourself with the following personal tests.

You've already inventoried your particular strengths and skills. Let's delve a little deeper into your "self." Can you think of any personal achievements? Make a list of these and think about them. Do you feel that they were things that you enjoyed? Did you have a wonderful time while you were accomplishing these tasks?

Assignment

Take a minute to make a list of your personal achievements, and then write about why you think these tasks were accomplishments, and then add it to your binder.



One of the most frequently used personal “reviews” (also called an inventory) is the “[Dependable Strengths Articulation Process](#)” developed by Bernard Haldane in 1945. This is a method that helps you determine your individual strengths. While this is typically an 18 hour workshop process the fundamentals can be duplicated in your own home. Gather a few of your friends and begin by telling them about your good experiences (events in your life that you believe you did well.) Have them write down the top qualities that they believe you used in those experiences. From those qualities you can use the Dependable Strengths Chart to explore your strengths. Then take the time to test in reality if those strengths really work for you.

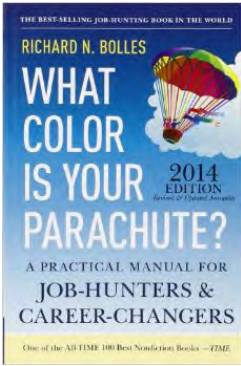
Assignment

Have your friends write down your “amazing stories.” Then ask them to write the top qualities that they believe you displayed during those experiences. Compare those qualities to the Dependable Strengths Chart.

Career Experimentation

A remake of the age old idea of “apprenticeship” is the new “Job-Shadowing.” Find a program that enables second year college students to “shadow” an alumni that is working in their field. Through these programs the student is paired with someone who takes time to answer their questions, show them where they work, and allow them to watch the work process. Throughout this experience the student can relate to how their courses are applicable to the career they have chosen. If you know of any one that has chosen the same career that you are interested in, ask them if you might be able to “shadow” them for a period of time. This experience will give direct first hand knowledge of the career in question.

Another promising career choice method is the idea of “un-jobbing.” An interview with Michael Fogler author of the book entitled, “Un-Jobbing” reveals the concept as similar to the idea of unschooling. One simply follows their passions and their interests while finding ways to make money using those interests. Mr. Fogler encourages the “un-jobber” to live frugally and watch all expenditures thus making it easier to follow one’s interests and strengths without pressure.



A very popular resource for someone wanting to find their perfect career is the book “What Color is Your Parachute?” by Richard N. Bolles. This book is a “best-seller” when it comes to career exploration. In this book the author has the job hunter do several assignments (sounds familiar, huh?). One of those assignments is the Flower Exercise. This is a diagram that helps you identify the key “desirable characteristics” of your dream job. Take a minute to review [The Flower Exercise](#) and map it out for yourself.

Assignment

Do any of these methods of career exploration stand out to you? Choose one and develop a “map” of how you can use the method in your situation.

Personality Test

By now you’ve been poking and prodding at your inner self, but you aren’t done yet! Sure, we know you live with yourself everyday but do you REALLY know who you are? People are often surprised by the results they receive from personality tests. You might discover something about yourself that will make a huge difference in your life!



Here is a test that is similar to the Myers-Briggs Test. This [personality test](#) will test you for various personality types. This test is pretty self explanatory and takes about 12 minutes to complete.

Most online career tests will test interests, skills, values, personality, and often a combination of all of these. Though some tests will test only personality most career tests will give you a general list of a few possible career matches.

Assignment

Take the personality test and send your results via email. You can then print them and put them in your binder.

Career Tests

Now that you've taken your personality test... why not take a few more tests while you are at it? The following assessments will test your aptitude for specific career areas. These tests are some of the best and easiest to help you determine your best fit. Most career counselors suggest taking more than one test to ensure accuracy. Obviously, if the same strengths show up on more than one test it should be pretty evident that it may be an accurate reflection of you.

The [Free Career Test](#) is a quick 3 minute test that will give you a few simple career matches.

Career Fitter has a free [60 question career test](#) that you can take for career suggestions. Assessment.

com also has a [free career test](#) that will give you some basic career suggestions as a result of your test.

Assignment

Take these career tests and print out the findings. Review each of the test results to see if there is a pattern. Compare that with the personality test findings. Now it's time for you to make your well informed decision.



Hard skills would be job-specific skills that would match a specific job, and would vary according to the type of employment being sought.

Examples of hard skills might be:

- ❖ Computer Programming
- ❖ Patient Care
- ❖ Plumbing skills
- ❖ Construction skills



[Kiplinger's Personal Finance Magazine](#) has created a list of the best careers for those not seeking college, and a [Best Careers](#) for the future according to growth, job availability, job stability, income potential, and education.

Looking at two of the careers mentioned, Nurse Practitioner and Plumber, students will see that there are different levels of training and education required. Of course, each career path will have a different set of required skills and those skills can be learned in a variety of places and through different methods. Let's explore the job skills, education, and resources associated with pursuing the careers of Nurse and Plumber, two of the top careers from the Kiplinger articles.

Nurse Practitioner or Registered Nurse

Job skills

- ❖ Strong math skills
- ❖ Strong Science skills
- ❖ Problem solving skills
- ❖ Observation skills
- ❖ Strong communication skills, both verbal and written
- ❖ Coping skills: It is very important to be able to remain calm under pressure as many of the situations in which a nurse finds herself (himself) will be time sensitive, emotionally charged, life and death, or all of the above.

- ❖ People skills: As a nurse you will have a lot of people contact with patients, their families, as well as other healthcare professionals

What to take in high school?

According to the Pennsylvania Institute of Technology the courses most important in high school to best prepare a student for a career in nursing include:

- ❖ Reading Comprehension
- ❖ Communication
 - English
 - Speech or Public Speaking
- ❖ Sciences, the more biological sciences a student can take the better prepared they will be, this includes biology, anatomy, physiology. Chemistry and math are included in the list of courses that will be helpful for the student.
- ❖ Job shadowing or volunteering in a hospital or nursing home environment would allow the student to better understand the nursing career.



Education

Education to become a nurse comes in several different forms.

- ❖ Licensed Professional Nurses, also called LPNs or Licensed Vocational Nurses, LVNs, generally receive their education and training through career colleges, vocational schools, or community colleges. The course of study is usually about a year. LPNs or LVNs work under the supervision of Registered Nurses and provide basic patient care. As the name suggests, a licensing test that is usually state specific must be passed in addition to completing course work to enter this field.
- ❖ Registered Nurse or RN education is usually attained through a nursing school. These schools may be free-standing schools, associated with a hospital training program, or through a college. The course of study is usually about two years and often results in an Associate degree, or the equivalent. Because of the additional training year, there are positions available for RNs that would not be available for LPNs, as well as medical procedures that can be performed by an RN that are not allowed to an LPN. In addition to coursework there is also a license test that must be passed which is state specific.

- ❖ BSNs earn a bachelor's degree in nursing. This is generally a four year college program resulting in a BS degree with specialization in nursing. BSNs spend longer getting their degree but also have greater opportunities. One study by Rasmussen College indicates that while RNs are qualified for 51 percent of available nursing jobs, BSNs are qualified for 88% of the available nursing jobs.
- ❖ RNs who chose to achieve the higher degree of BSN often enroll in completer programs which takes the RN degree and experience, add about a year of coursework, and result in a BSN degree.This can often be done online.

In general, it is safe to assume that receiving more post high school education in the field of nursing will result in greater pay. Additionally, more opportunities for employment are available as education in nursing increases.

Resources

- ❖ Johnson and Johnson has a great online publication entitled [Starting Out Discovering Nursing](#) which gives useful information on preparing for a nursing career beginning with suggested courses in high school.
- ❖ Schools
 - A2Zcolleges.com has a great sortable list of [nursing schools in the United States](#)
- ❖ Associations and Professional Organizations
 - [American Nurses' Association](#)
 - [National League for Nursing](#)
 - [National Student Nurses' Association](#) (NSNA)
- ❖ Additional Resources
- ❖ In addition to the associations and organizations, this is a comprehensive list of [nursing magazines and journals](#) compiled by [NursingSchool.org](#).

Plumber

Job Skills

- ❖ Problem solving skills
- ❖ Solid math skills
- ❖ Mechanical aptitude
- ❖ Physical strength: Plumbing can be a physically demanding job so physical strength is a plus.

- ❖ Ability to read blue prints
- ❖ Drafting abilities are a plus

What to take in high school?

To become a plumber the student will require strong skills in math, so the more math courses a student can fit into high school the better. Strong emphasis on physical science and physics would be a bonus. Communication skills as could be learned through English and public speaking would be helpful. Electives that include drafting, pipefitting, and business administration would also be beneficial. Job shadowing is beneficial for most careers as it allows students to really understand the career they intend to pursue.

Education

- ❖ High school diploma or GED
- ❖ Vocational school is the first step for many who wish to become plumbers. While vocational schools do not necessarily provide the student with all of the knowledge necessary to take the certification test, it does provide some of the technical knowledge. Some high schools provide this vocational training, but usually the student needs to go to a vocational or technical school post high school.
- ❖ Apprenticeship is the primary way most people become plumbers. Since apprenticeships are usually paid positions the competition is fairly steep for those posts. Vocational schools help to provide a more educated apprentice, and therefore are helpful in securing an apprenticeship. Apprenticeships are usually run either by plumbers unions or by the United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of Plumbing and Pipefitting Industry. Apprenticeships usually include 144 or more hours yearly of classroom hours as well as on the job training and last between four and five years.
- ❖ Certification is the next step. There is a certification or licensing exam and this is area specific, meaning that an individual who passes the licensing exam in Alabama would not be qualified to secure a license in New York. The reason for this is that the exam not only tests on practical plumbing skills such as pipes and drains, and the ability to read blueprints, but also includes information on building codes which are area specific. Most people wishing to sit for the exam have two to five years of experience testing.



Resources

- ❖ Schools
 - A List of [top schools for plumbing](#)
 - [Plumbing Trade Schools Guide](#)
- ❖ Professional Organizations
 - [United Association](#) Union of Plumbers, Fitters, Welders, and HVAC Service Technicians
- ❖ Additional Resources
 - [Plumbing Associations and Organizations List](#) is available at PlumbingWeb.com

Assignment

Now it is your turn to apply what you have learned so far. The instructions are simple. Take the information that you learned in Week One regarding how to choose a career, add in the information you learned about yourself, your interests, and aptitudes in Week Two, and consider what career you might be interested in pursuing. Once you have a career in mind, use the examples from Week Three to help you develop a course of action to achieve that career. Remember that the internet can be a great source for information to complete this assignment!

Use this worksheet to design and research your course of action.

1. Based on information you gathered in Week One and Week Two, what career are you interested in? Choose one for the purpose of this exercise.
2. What job skills do you feel would be helpful in your chosen career? Include in the list job skills that would be career specific as well as job skills that would be sought out by any employer.
3. What courses in high school do you feel would be helpful in preparing you for a career in your chosen field? List the courses and why you discovered those courses would be useful.
4. Where would you find additional education after high school to follow your chosen career path? List the types of preparation as well as the length of study.



5. List two or three specific places to achieve the education listed in the previous question.
6. At the end of that course of study, what do you get that proves you are qualified for your career? Examples might be a degree, a diploma, certification, a license, etc.
7. What additional resources did you find that pertain to your chosen career? List 2 or 3 professional organizations, associations, unions, etc.
8. What do you expect the initial pay to be for entry level of your chosen career?
9. Using the mindmapping example of the job skills every employer wants from page 9, create your own mind map for job specific skills for your chosen career.

WEEK FOUR

Career Explorations - Get Your Parents Involved and Take the Next Step

As you have worked through this course and all of the accompanying activities, I'm sure you have begun to see a pattern emerging. You should be able to see a picture of what you really are. Your strengths, passions, and skills have been brought to light and now you are ready to take the next step.

As you move into the reality of finding a job within the career that you fits you, it's time to take advantage of several methods. Many career counselors suggest using alternate ways to get yourself "out there." Using each of these to develop a network for yourself is an amazing way to keep your resume and information in front of the right people. Did you know that according to statistics just posting your job resume on a job search board is one of the least effective methods of job hunting? Sadly, that is probably the most widely used method today. However, employers don't always check these job boards. Interaction takes place more frequently through direct contact. LinkedIn and other similar sites are great places to begin networking yourself. If you find out that your dream job is open, take the extra time to go by and visit the company, email the person in charge of hiring, and even ask if you can take a tour.



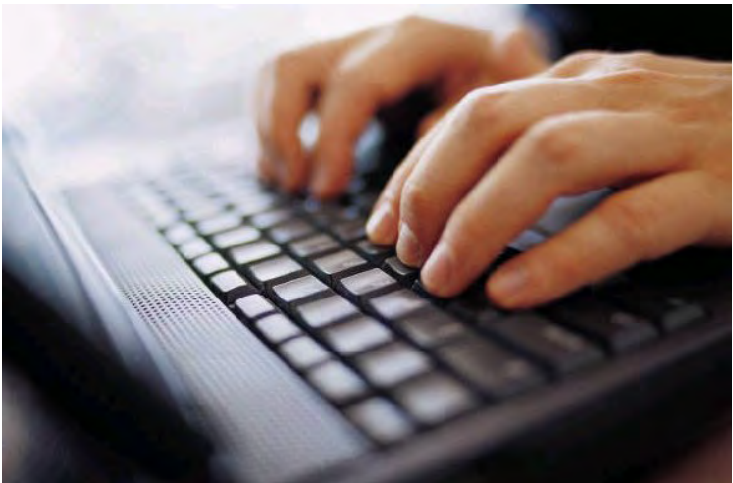
Parents can be a huge help in building your network. After you've discovered your career, take some time to sit down with your parents and talk with them about your career choice. You may discover that dad or mom have friends in that particular field that may be able to help you get volunteer experience or even an entry level job. Don't be afraid to talk about your decision to your friends and extended family. The same idea applies here, they may know someone who can be a benefit in helping you get started on your career. Even if they might not be able to get you an actual job they may be able to allow you to get a hands on look at what really happens day to day in that specific career.

Assignment

Sit down with your parents and brainstorm ways in which you might be able to get your foot in the door with your chosen career. Write everything down and put it in your binder.

Writing a Resume

Can you believe that we are already on our last assignment? Depending on what you choose as a career, you may need to write a resume. No, don't run. It really isn't as bad as you might think. There are few simple steps to writing a great resume and they aren't at all complicated. In fact, most word processor programs



have resume templates that you can access and use. Just in case you can't access one of those templates we've provided one for you at the end of this chapter. Though one important thing to remember is that you want to communicate your individuality and strengths through your resume. So, even though you may have a template you can follow make it unique by giving it your own twist.

Step One: What to Include

Take a minute to think through your life. What are the highlights of the amazing years of your life? Get out a pencil and paper and start a rough draft of this resume. This resume is for your future employer. You are trying your best to give him/her a clear picture of what a great person you are, so you need to ask yourself, "What do they want to know about me?" You can include the big things, but don't forget to include character qualities as well. Qualities that show what type of person you are such as: friendly, sociable, good leadership skills, polite, etc.

Include experiences that may not be education or previous job related. Think through any type of experience that may relate to the career in which you are interested.

Think about things that may not be related to the career you want, but that require the same qualities and relate those experiences. As a homeschooler you've had varied experiences, which will make your resume differ from the typical version. This is great, because it will make your resume stand out from the crowd!

Step Two: Writing the Resume

Though we have provided a detailed template to help guide you through the process of writing your resume, it's up to you to personalize it. One of the biggest things that employers look for is a candidate that stands out from the rest. As a homeschooler you have had a unique educational experience, and now is the time to maximize on that individuality! It is now up to you to keep your resume from the "wastebasket", which you can do by adding personal details, specific talents or interests, or the things that you think would apply to the specific job for which they are hiring. The key is to be creative, yet keep it all relevant to the specific job for which they are hiring.

Assignment

Take the time to create a resume now and include it in your binder. The following is a simple template to help you create your own individual resume for success.



GETTING A JOB CAN BE SCARY!

Discover **TIPS FOR GETTING A HEAD START ON YOUR CAREER PATH!**

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO](#)

Name
Address
Phone Number
Email Address

Objective

Why are you interested in this particular job? Be creative!

Skills

Have you had any opportunities to develop a skill that might be useful for this job?

Employment History

(NOTE: if this is your first job, you can leave out this section)

List every job you've held from the most recent descending to the first.

For example:

2019-Present **Title**
of Position Job
responsibilities.

2017-2019
Title of Position
Job responsibilities.

Experience

- *Detail any experiences that you may have had that could directly relate to the job for which you are applying, including apprenticeships, volunteer opportunities, extracurricular activities, and*
- *Skills: This is your opportunity to share the traits you have that would benefit this potential employer.*
- *Examples might be: dynamic personality, experience with machinery, perseverance in completing tasks, etc.*

Education

Does your homeschool have a name? This might be a great time to create one!

List all the schools and homeschools you have attended,

For example:

ABC Homeschool Academy - Newnan, GA

Dual Enrollment Courses - Jackson Community College - Monroe, GA

References

As a homeschooler, it's likely that you have had multiple opportunities to interact with people of all ages. These people often make terrific references, so when considering who to include, don't forget previous tutors, art/music teachers, volunteer supervisors, church leaders, and others who have spent enough time with you to be able to honestly recommend you for a position. (Don't include family members). Be sure to share each person's name, address, and telephone number in this section.

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