



Chapter Two: It's Only 4 Steps: The Career Exploration Process

"At first Andrew didn't want to take your Career Exploration class, but it turned out to be one of his favorites," an enthusiastic mother told me. I had just completed a semester-long class for 8th to 12th graders at my homeschool co-op. The seventeen teenagers relished studying themselves!

Career Exploration Is a Process, Not a Point

The goal of this book is to learn a process. It will teach you the tools that will allow you to search for a future career. My hope is that you will finish this book with three possible careers you could pursue or at least a general idea of a career path to follow.

My own life has had several career explorations. During high school, I decided on a college major: engineering. I considered my skills and abilities, but I didn't consider priorities such as time with family. After I became a mother, my priorities changed and I had another period of career investigation. I found accounting to be to my liking and very flexible. I retrained, became a CPA, and now work as a self-employed accountant. It is an excellent fit of career and family for me.

The 4-Step Career Exploration Process

In order to explore possibilities for the careers you may be interested in, you'll work through these four steps:

1. Investigate: Discover your personality, abilities, skills, and priorities.
2. Match possible careers to your personality.
3. Research potential careers to see if there is a fit.
4. Prepare a plan to pursue your career choice including picking a college.

By way of example, when my daughter Emily was 14, she learned from taking my career exploration class that she was organized, encouraging, and detail oriented.

That's the first step, investigate, which you'll do in Chapter Three.

She took some fun personality tests that matched her traits to several careers (Step 2 which will be covered in Chapter Four). She researched about six of them in detail (Step 3 and Chapters Five through Eight in this book). She rejected some upon learning more about them and ultimately settled on pharmacy, teaching, and accounting. She planned to take biology and chemistry classes in high school. If Emily liked those subjects, she thought she would pursue pharmacy. If not, she could become an accountant. She also volunteered her time teaching a children's Sunday School class to see if she would enjoy being a teacher. Those were all part of Step 4, her plan, which you will do in Chapter Nine.

See how she went through the four steps? It took her about a month or two to go through the first three steps. The fourth step can take longer. The planning doesn't take too long, but executing the plan can take years, especially for a high school student.

Having a Goal

The last step in the career exploration process is creating an education and experience plan to meet your goals. Think about what classes, part-time jobs, or volunteering you can pursue now to prepare you for the future. If you have a goal in sight, your schoolwork and part-time jobs become more meaningful.

You will learn about graduation requirements in your state and also what most colleges expect in Chapters Nine and Ten.

Then you will make a high school plan that is unique to you. In my class, David was a student considering engineering. His plan includes a full load of math and science classes. In contrast, Sarah is interested in acting as a career, so she was encouraged to participate in a summer drama camp run by a local Christian high school.

Life Is an Adventure

The career exploration experience may trigger something dynamic for you. It did in my class. A change occurred as the students began to chart a career path with manageable steps to get there. They became more interested in their classes, started setting goals, and talking about their futures.

I encouraged my students to consider carefully how they spent their time, what kind of classes they selected, and what part-time jobs or volunteer opportunities they



Chapter Four: You Can't Fail These Tests: Personality Tests

Personality tests can be a lot of fun to take. There's no studying and no wrong answers! It's also interesting to compare yourself to your friends and family. Have them take some of these tests and compare your answers. You might find you understand your family a lot better!

Before you start these personality tests, let me explain the way they group people. These tests use something they call typology, which is the study of types of people. According to Carl Jung, a Swiss psychologist, all people can be characterized using the following three criteria:

Extraverts or Introverts

Sensing or Intuition

Thinking or Feeling

Dr. Jung did not mean that some people don't think or others don't feel emotions, it just a way he used to describe how we process information and make decisions.

Isabel Briggs Myers created a popular personality inventory and added a fourth

criterion: Judging - Perceiving

Let me explain what each of these personality types mean. Each of them represents a continuum between two opposite poles.

Extraversion - Introversion refers to the source of a person's energy. An extravert's source of energy comes mainly from the external world. They get energized by being around people, but an introvert gets energy mainly by being alone.

Sensing - Intuition refers to how someone deals with information. Sensing means that a person believes information that comes directly from the external world. Intuition means that a person believes information that they can interpret and add meaning, usually through personal experience.

Thinking - Feeling has to do with how a person processes information. Thinking means that a person makes a decision mainly through logic. Feeling means that he or she makes a decision based on emotion or based on what they feel they should do.

Judging - Perceiving reflects how a person implements the information he or she has processed. Judging means that a person organizes all of his life events and, as a rule, sticks to his plans. Perceiving means that he or she is inclined to improvise and explore alternative options.

Jung Typology Test



Go to www.humanmetrics.com and take the Jung Typology Test. It is free and should take you about 10 minutes.

What are you? _____ (you'll need this for later)

Click though some of the links especially the Jung Career Indicator.

- **Employment or self-employment.** Test a future career by getting a job working in your chosen field.



If a job is hard to find, start a business related to your future career. One teenager, Meghan, wanted to be a professional violinist in high school. She explored this career by starting a micro business offering violin lessons to beginning students. It confirmed her decision to study violin in college.

For more information on starting a micro business visit MicroBusinessForTeens.com

Here are some possible careers you can test out by starting a micro business. Add a few more micro businesses related to your career interests.

Career	Micro Business
Teacher	Babysitter/Nanny/Tutor
Artist	Graphic Designer
Accountant	Bookkeeper
Musician	Accompanist, Music Teacher
Writer	Blogger, Editor

- **College course guides.** Look online at several college course guides. Pick a popular college near you or your state university. They will list the type of classes you will take in each major they offer. For example, I googled “nursing Ohio State University” and it led me to a list of classes nurses take. Ask yourself if studying these classes for four years (or more) would interest you.



Chapter Eight: Creating a High School Plan

Now that you've composed a list of possible careers and done your research, you have a goal to aim for! It's time to create a plan to accomplish that goal. In this chapter you're going to create a high school plan of classes and experiences to be sure you are prepared for your future career.

High School Graduation Requirements

I want you to be prepared for the next phase of your career journey and part of that starts with assessing where you are right now, so let's start with what it takes to graduate from high school.

Since you're homeschooled, start by asking your parent(s) what is required for you to graduate. Your parent(s) and not the State determines graduation requirements for you. That's the freedom of homeschooling, but it's also a huge responsibility. Fortunately, there is some guidance.

State Requirements for Graduation

Start with what your state requires of high school graduates. Google your state and "high school graduation requirements." Hopefully you'll find a list something like