



HIGH SCHOOL

# Career Success Workbook

PART 1 OF 3:

ENGAGE & UNDERSTAND



Excellent  
Content



Activities



Real World  
Application



# Icon Key

## KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR THESE!

While you're reading, you will come across the following symbols and frequently-used acronyms:



### Thumbs-Up Icon

This icon indicates an activity for you to complete. When you see one, stop and look for instructions or action items.



### Exclamation Point Icon

All information detailed in this workbook is important, but this icon indicates a particularly vital section.

**CDMP:** Career Decision-Making Process

**CP:** Career Portfolio

**FAFSA:** Free Application for Federal Student Aid

**LMCI:** Labor Market & Career Information

**TWC:** Texas Workforce Commission



Published March 2023

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# Introduction



# PLAN AFTER HIGHSCHOOL

You may have noticed that the older you get, the more it becomes your responsibility to plan your own next steps.

When you graduated from pre-k, you didn't have to think about where you were going to go to elementary school and what classes you were going to take. The adults in your life did that for you, but now you're in high school. You may be getting ready to graduate, this year or in the next few years. What are you going to do next? That's not a rhetorical question; you need to have a plan. "Yeah, but I like to be spontaneous!" Spontaneity is great! It can help you later in life when you're confronted with the unexpected, but have you ever had to catch a plane? No one just pops into an airport and says, "Okay, I'll just catch the next one that's going where I want to go." You could be waiting there for days. Suppose you can't pay for the ticket? It's better to know well in advance where you will be going, when, and how much it will cost. Life rewards good planning. That's what this publication is about — career success. Career success is different for everybody, and everyone decides for themselves what that success will look like.

## An Effective Way to Plan

You can plan your high school years and beyond with the Career Decision-Making Process (CDMP). CDMP will help you choose a career direction, identify the kinds of occupations that will help you follow your chosen career direction, and identify the kinds of training you will need. CDMP consists of six steps, and we have divided Career Success into six chapters — one for each.

- 1. Engage** – Get started
- 2. Understand** – Identify your interests and abilities
- 3. Explore** – Look for your options
- 4. Evaluate** – Review your options
- 5. Act** – Pursue an education plan
- 6. Reflect** – Review and evaluate your decisions





### **GET READY TO TAKE NOTES**

Keep all of your information together in a notebook and create your career portfolio (CP). The Education Outreach team with TWC's Labor Market and Career Information division has created a CP for you to use with this publication. It's called the High School Career Portfolio. Add pocket pages or folders for important documents like recommendation letters and resume drafts. Follow the exercises in this workbook and use our Career Portfolio to collect your information and to practice additional activities. All of this may change as you grow older, have new experiences, and learn, so be sure to put a date on each of your entries. Keeping the CP electronically may be the best way to go, since you will be adding to and changing your CP as you make new decisions, create new plans, or take new actions. Just be sure to periodically print and keep an updated hard copy. Your CP will document your career development over time while helping you stay on track in your pursuit of knowledge and new skills.

## TAKE RISKS, DON'T FEAR MISTAKES

The more facts you have, the better equipped you are to make informed decisions. But no matter how much information you have, there will always be an element of risk when the time comes to decide which path you will take, and risk can be emotionally difficult for some people. You must embrace it. Some students make decisions not to pursue certain career paths because they are afraid of failure, or letting people down, or making mistakes. They choose easy courses, easy careers, the “safe route.” That does not have to be you. When we make a mistake, especially those that produce a negative emotional response, our immediate desire is to avoid repeating that mistake at all costs, right? Like when you started learning how to ride your bike and you fell and scraped your knee something awful. You didn’t want to get back on at first, maybe ever! This response is predictable and common, but also emotional. The problem with responding only emotionally is we don’t take the opportunity to rationally examine how that happened. We don’t learn from it, so either we repeat the mistake if we try again later, or we don’t try again at all.

If instead, we think logically about what happened (Were we pedaling too fast? Did we take our eyes off the path in front of us? etc.), we can figure out our mistakes and correct them. We can understand how those mistakes affected us or others and make plans to ensure we don’t repeat those mistakes. When we respond this way, we learn and grow from the experience.



## DROP OUT OF CHOOSING

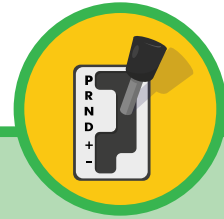
Sometimes students who do not know what they want to do after high school decide to drop out, but dropping out does not solve the problem. Students who drop out of high school will have fewer career choices, not more. Not all students have failing grades when they drop out of school. In fact, many students have passing grades when they call it quits. Some of them drop out because they found the classes uninteresting, or they missed too many days, they hung out with people who encouraged them to quit school, or they wanted more “freedom.” But the same rules and tasks a person wants to escape by dropping out of high school will be required at any job (and once out of high school, you will need a job). For starters, just like in school, any employee is required to show up to work, on time, and to follow the instructions of their supervisor (at school it’s your teacher; at work it’s your boss). You also must work hard, meet deadlines, and treat your customers and coworkers (like your classmates) with respect if you ever want to advance and be successful. The key to the freedom you desire is the success that earning good grades and a paycheck provide—not dropping out, which earns you neither. Students who drop out may find themselves working at low-paying jobs for several years until they realize they need more education in order to get a higher wage, (insurance, retirement,) and to advance. They then have to attend GED classes in order to pass the GED exam. Once passed, it will be on to college or other training that they will have to pay for; sometimes covering the same material students could have already studied in high school for free.



## Fundamentals of Decision Making

You will be making several decisions in this process. How do we make decisions? There are two parts of the brain we use when making decisions. The prefrontal cortex controls your cognitive (or logical and rational) thinking. The limbic system oversees your emotions (and responses). When you are presented with information, your brain fires neurons to one of these portions of your brain in order to synthesize and work with that information. Your brain can only work with information in one of those two systems at any given moment.

In other words, you can only think about a decision rationally or emotionally, but not both at the same time. It's like gears in a car. You can drive in first gear, you can shift to second gear, maybe shift back and forth, but not both. It is important to understand this when you're asked to collect and use information to make decisions. This publication shares critical information in order to help you make logical and informed decisions to ensure success for you now in high school and in your future career. When you are thinking about your options, goals, and resources, you want to weigh it all logically and rationally — using that prefrontal cortex.



## **SHIFT GEARS!**

If at any point you find yourself feeling strong emotions during this CDMP, just stop and tell yourself, "Hey, that's my limbic system kicking in again." Your brain is in the wrong gear! Shift. Stop reading. Stop thinking. Take a deep breath. Flooding your brain with oxygen will reroute your neurons back to your prefrontal cortex. Let your body relax, and take in several deep breaths. While you're at it, you might do something active.

Try jumping jacks, some pushups, or running around for a few minutes. These physical exercises also flood your body with the relaxing oxygen it needs to reset your brain. These activities can be done anywhere, anytime you are feeling any kind of extreme emotion that is affecting your ability to think logically. We want to make sure that you are making the best-informed decisions that you can. That means doing two things: first, empowering you with the facts (that's our job), and second, making sure your brain is always in the proper gear to focus on those facts (that's your job).

## **THREE CHALLENGES**

While working through this publication:

1. Be aware of your feelings.

If you find yourself reacting emotionally about an assignment, shift gears.

2. Minimize risk using the facts in this book.

Then, take that risk by choosing your path to career success.

3. Don't sweat mistakes.

See how much you can grow not despite them, but because of them.



## Emotion or Logic?

Directions: Some of the following decisions were made based on emotion, and some logic. If their decisions were made based on emotion, circle the E to the left. If the decisions were made based on logic, circle the L.

**E L**

Alejandro is buying a new pair of jeans for the football game because he doesn't have a pair of jeans like those his friends will be wearing.

**E L**

Zeena wants to be a carpenter, but is not taking shop because the teacher, Mr. Zukouski, is strict.

**E L**

Mariela takes a career assesment to figure out her college major. Her counselor helps her learn the requirements for her career. She now knows what she wants to major in, and which engineering programs to apply to.

**E L**

Praneel wants to be a computer programmer to create video games, but his dad thinks he should be an accountant because he is really good at math. Praneel is worried about making his father proud, so he pursues a career as an accountant.

**E L**

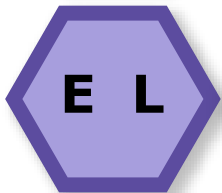
Mr. Munson gave Hayao a low grade on an essay. Hayao has decided not to do the next assignment.

**E L**

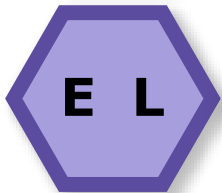
Greta learned about healthcare careers in class. She did some research using Texas Career Check online and found a job she thinks she'd like. She has requested information from a local college about their physical therapy program.

**E L**

As a sophomore, David didn't pass his college assessment exam, so he couldn't take any dual credit classes junior year. David worries he won't pass again, so he's decided not to retake it this year, and will miss the chance to take dual credit classes his senior year.



Jhumpa was offered two different seasonal jobs for the summer; one as a research assistant in a company she hopes to work for some day, and another at her favorite amusement park. She took the job at the amusement park because summers are meant to be fun!



Asher wants to be a veterinarian one day. He decided to volunteer at the Humane Society, cleaning cat and dog kennels so that he can use it as experience on his résumé.

*To check your answers, see the answer key on page 21.*



### MY PLAN: JOSEPHINA

Rate this plan from 1 to 5 stars, with 1 star meaning it needs work and 5 stars as a success. Why did you give this rating?



"Hi, my name is Josephina. After I graduate from high school, I plan to go to Texas State Technical College in West Texas. I spoke to my counselor, and we decided that since I want to be a paramedic, TSTC would be a good choice. I'll be able to live at home and commute to school. That means I can save money to pay for school or a car. We'll see. I'm a little worried because I only took three science classes during high school, but I am prepared to take a few pre-requisite classes in my first year of community college to catch up if I need to."

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

# **Step 1:**



# **Engage**

## THINKING ABOUT A CAREER

Finding the best career path requires getting help from people who know you well: your talents, what you do in your free time, and what you're excited about. Ask the adults in your life (like family members, neighbors, coaches, teachers or counselors) for help with this step.

### What Do You Want to Contribute to the World?

For many people, one of the hardest questions to answer is, "What problem do you want to solve?" or "What do you want to contribute to the world?" Some people seem to know from the day they are born what they want to do with their life. It seems these people discovered their career path early on and had a passion for that career. Do you fit into this category? If you do, great! If not, don't worry. Many people don't know. In fact, many of your parents were in the same situation when they were your age.

Not knowing what career you want after high school is not a problem. But the sooner you engage, the more quickly you can sharpen your understanding of what you want in a career. As a high school student, you are in the best position to start looking at different career directions. You can explore different classes and programs to determine your likes and dislikes. By finding those, you will be able to pick among different career paths until you find the one you like the most. Once you find the career path you like, you will be able to answer the question, "What do you want to contribute to the world?"



## EDUCATION AND MONEY: CONNECTION?

Obviously, there is a strong connection between how much money you make and the lifestyle you want. There is also a strong connection between your educational background, the field you work in, and your ability to earn money. Take a look at the following chart:

Education Attained	Median* Weekly Earnings	Median* Unemployment
Doctorate Degree	\$1,909	1.5%
Professional Degree	\$1,924	1.8%
Master's Degree	\$1,547	2.6%
Bachelor's Degree	\$1,334	3.5%
Associate's Degree	\$963	4.6%
Some College, No Degree	\$899	5.5%
High School Diploma	\$809	6.2%
Less than High School Diploma	\$626	8.3%

**\*Median:** the middle number in a sequence of numbers (or the average of the two middle numbers, when the sequence has an even amount of numbers).

**NOTE:** Earnings are for full-time wage and salary workers, ages 25 and over. Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.

## NOTICE ANYTHING?

Say you decide to go with a high school diploma. How much money will you make weekly? Statistically speaking, you're likely to make about \$809 a week. Now, use [TexasRealityCheck.com](https://www.texasrealitycheck.com) to compare incomes and expenses. You will find that \$809 a week might get you some of the basics (housing, utilities, food, and transportation), but not entertainment or savings for retirement.

Look at the weekly earnings for bachelor's degrees—it's \$1,334. That's \$525 more per week than with a high school diploma alone. Do the math: that's \$27,300 more per year. Basically, as your educational attainment goes up, your earnings are more likely to increase. Keep in mind that the field you work in affects your earning potential just as much as your education level. If financial stability is a priority for you, take time to research the earnings of individuals with the same degree in different industries before deciding which education level and occupations to pursue.

Lastly, check out the unemployment rate. This is the percentage of people earning zero dollars because they are looking for a job, but cannot find one. The more education attained, the less chance there is of unemployment.

## Three Basic Questions for Your Future

When considering questions like educational attainment and jobs to pursue, you can take a reality check by asking yourself three basic questions:

1. Lifestyle – What kind of lifestyle do you want for yourself?
2. Cost – How much will that lifestyle cost?
3. Interest – What kind of jobs both interest you and pay for the lifestyle you want?

But money shouldn't be the only consideration in your educational choice and eventual career decision. Other things can be equally or more important, such as family life, job satisfaction, work environment, making a difference in your community or outdoor/indoor activities. Furthermore, what you do for work, or how you work, may be more important to you. Some people prefer to work alone, need to create something with their hands, work with numbers, or like to manage others. No matter what, you get to decide what is most important to you when choosing a career.

## TEXAS REALITY CHECK

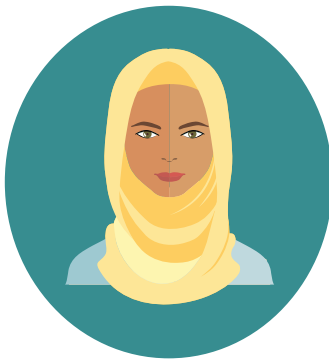
There's a good chance you've never figured out what your ideal lifestyle will really cost. Do you want to live in a basic or luxury apartment, or house? Wear regular or designer clothes? Drive a used or expensive car, or ride the bus? Do you want a smartphone, tablet, gym membership, to travel, or all of the above? If you want it, you can get it. That said, you have to know what it costs and how you can afford it all.

Visit [TexasRealityCheck.com](https://TexasRealityCheck.com) and start shopping. The goal of Reality Check is to make you aware of all the expenses you will encounter once you live on your own and support yourself. If you know how much money you will be spending, it is a good idea to know which careers pay enough to cover those expenses. The infographic on this page provides examples of common jobs, including average pay and considerations when choosing that type of job.



### MY PLAN: AMIRA

Rate this plan from 1 to 5 stars, with 1 star meaning it needs work and 5 stars as a success. Why did you give this rating?



"Hi, my name is Amira, and I plan to go to college. I'm not sure which college I'm going to enroll in or what my major will be. I haven't found something I like, so I hope it comes to me soon. I graduate from high school in two years. If all else fails, I'll pick a university where most of my friends will attend and go there. After taking some classes, I'm sure I'll be able to pick a major."

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

## COMMON JOBS, THEIR PAY, AND CONSIDERATIONS

### Construction Manager

**Median Pay:** \$96,287

**Considerations:**

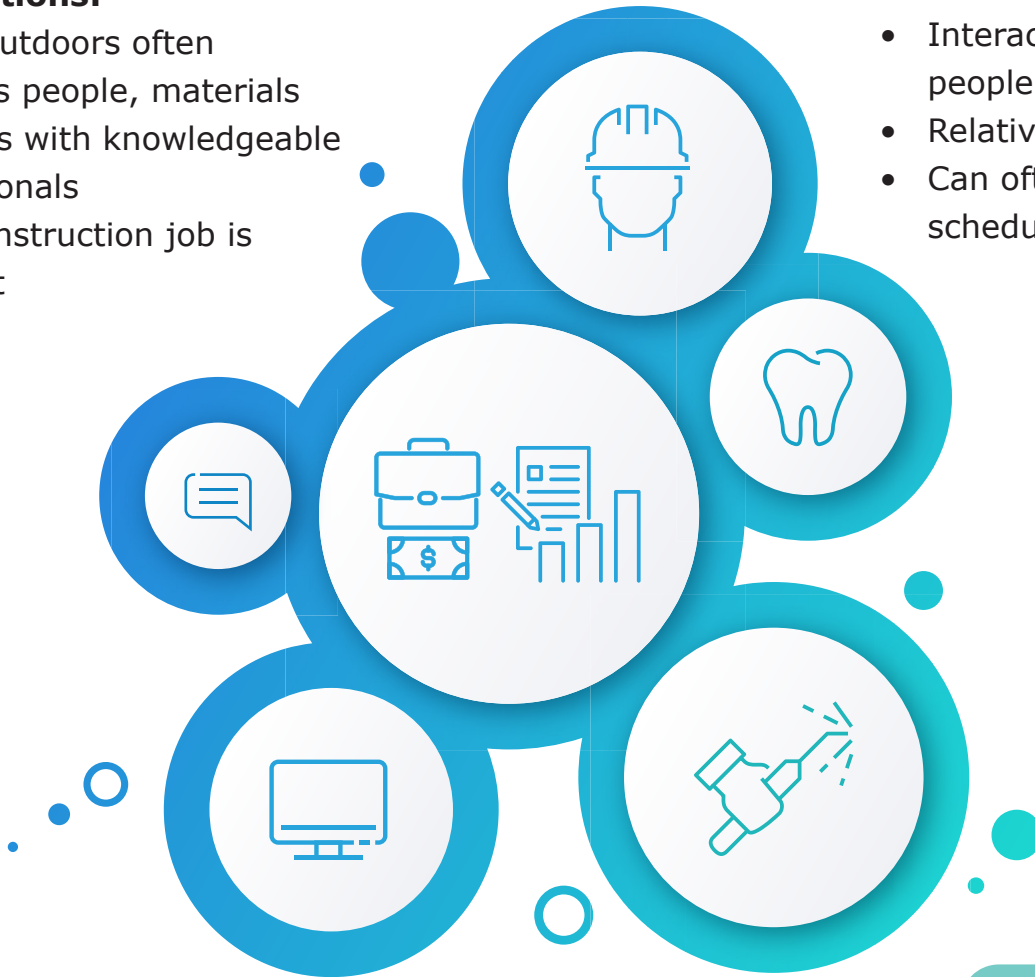
- Works outdoors often
- Manages people, materials
- Interacts with knowledgeable professionals
- Each construction job is different

### Dental Hygienist

**Median Pay:** \$77,600

**Considerations:**

- Works indoors
- Interacts with different people every day
- Relatively short training
- Can often set your own schedule



### Computer Programmer

**Median Pay:** \$77,291

**Considerations:**

- Works indoors
- Usually works with a team
- Highly mobile occupation
- Sometimes self-employed

### Welder

**Median Pay:** \$47,819

**Considerations:**

- Works outdoors and indoors
- Creates products by hand
- Work is physical, often solitary
- Can be creative

**NOTE:** This page displays income averages, which often differ from the starting pay you should expect to earn when beginning your career. Call the Career Information Hotline: 1-800-822-PLAN (7526) to obtain detailed information on any career of your choice.



## MY PLAN: TERRANCE

Rate this plan from 1 to 5 stars, with 1 star meaning it needs work and 5 stars as a success. Why did you give this rating?



"Hi, my name is Terrence and my plan is to become a video game designer. I've done some research and found out that Texas is ranked second in the nation in video game employment. Right now I have to decide between a four-year or a two-year college.

Obviously, the four-year school will cost more and take longer. I want to make sure I pick the right school. I have an appointment to talk with my guidance counselor and hopefully she will point me in the right direction."

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

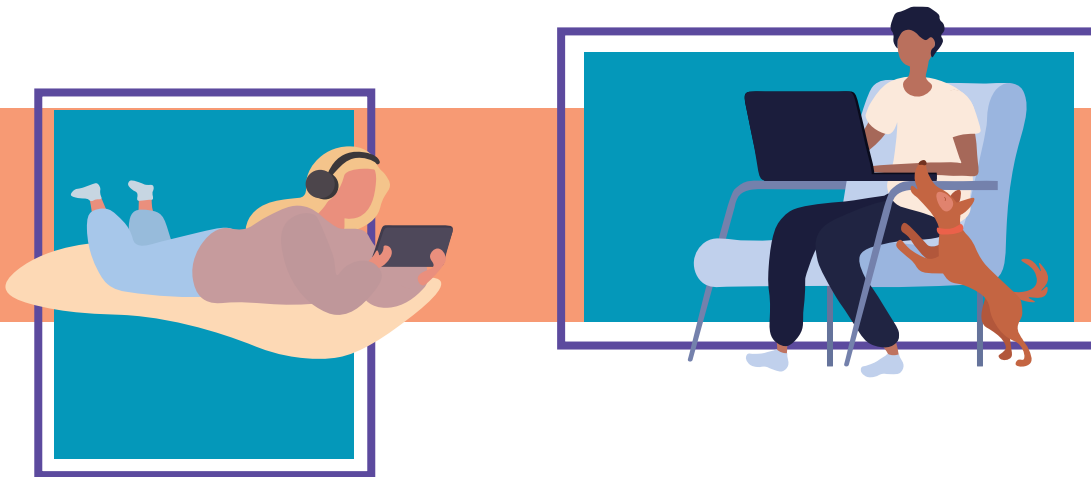
## Think Before You Post Online

While you are completing your education or training, you will likely also be having fun with your friends. You may take photos or videos and post them on social media accounts. These sites allow you to share your good times with the people you know. However, you should always think before you post anything online.

You may intend for your content to be viewed only by certain people you know and like. Or maybe it's the opposite, and you want everybody to see what you post online. Either way, you need to be smart about what you post. There's "good" viral and "bad" viral. You

want to make sure that the content you post will be considered positive, as going viral for controversial reasons can negatively impact your future—and yes, that even includes making it difficult to get a job later in life.

You've seen plenty of content online that has gone viral, both for good and bad reasons, so you already know what to avoid. Once you post something online, it is very hard (or downright impossible) to completely remove it, so always do your best to make sure you only post good content.



## **RULES TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN POSTING ONLINE**

1. Assume that all your posts will remain online forever and can never be completely deleted.
2. Post as if you knew your grandparents or a mentor would be reading about it later in the news.

Avoid documenting the following in your posts or online activity:

- Lying about qualifications
- Previous criminal behavior
- Speaking ill of former employers
- Sharing confidential information from former employers
- Boasting about drinking or doing drugs
- Posting provocative photographs
- Using an unprofessional screen name
- Bad-mouthing/gossiping about work or coworkers

Employers cannot legally discriminate against you due to your race/color, religion, sex, pregnancy, or national origin. But your online profile is fair game. A potential boss may nix job candidates, or hire them, based on what they find online.

**Step 2:**



**Understand**

# UNDERSTAND YOURSELF

You have now started thinking about a career direction. The next step is to understand yourself. You will want to think about your likes and dislikes, your values, personality traits, and skills, as well as considering what you are and are not good at to find the best career fit. Assessments or conversations with those who know you well can help you do this.

## What Are You Good At?

Everyone on the planet is good at some things and not so good at other things. No one is good at everything, and it's okay to admit that you have weaknesses as well as strengths. In fact, it's an important step towards understanding what you could be happy doing for a living in the future. While it might be easy to recognize the things that are difficult for you, a lot of people have a hard time stepping outside of themselves and recognizing the areas where they excel. Sometimes, we need another person to tell us we're good at something before we can realize it ourselves.



### TELL ME WHAT I'M GOOD AT: PART I

Find five trusted people in your life and have them answer the questions below. These individuals should include one friend your age, one parent or guardian, and one teacher. The last two can be anyone whom you know and trust.

1. What do you think I'm good at?
2. What assignments or projects have I completed well?
3. Have I ever done something that impressed you? What was it?
4. What topics do I tend to talk about often (and seem passionate about)?

Write them down now in your CP and use those strengths and abilities to guide you on your search for a career path.



***"Success doesn't come from what you can do. It comes from overcoming the things you thought you couldn't."***

*— Rikki Rogers*



## **TELL ME WHAT I'M GOOD AT: PART II**

Now, here are a few follow-up questions that you can ask yourself to prepare for the activity coming up next. To be clear, you should be the one answering these questions, not anyone else.

1. What do you like to do on the weekends when you have nothing else going on?
2. If you were guaranteed success in life, what would you do?
3. What are your favorite subjects in school?
4. What school clubs have you joined and why?

Look for consistencies between the answers you received from the people you trust about what you're good at, and the answers you gave about what you enjoy.

## **UNCOVER YOUR INTERESTS**

Now you're ready to visit some tools online that are designed to help you further understand what kinds of jobs might pique your interest. It is important to note that your high school email will be disabled after you graduate, and considering you will need to enter an email address to receive your results, you will want to use a personal email account to retain your results from the following activities after graduation.

### **Texas Career Check**

1. Go to [TexasCareerCheck.com](https://TexasCareerCheck.com).
2. Click "Explore Careers" at the top. In the drop-down menu, click "Interest Profiler" then follow the instructions on the screen.

The profiler will take you through 60 different example activities. When you're done, the profiler will provide you with scores based on six different types of jobs and examples of occupations that might suit you.

3. Add this information to your career portfolio (CP).

## RoadTrip Nation

Visit [RoadTripNation.com](http://RoadTripNation.com) and select the Roadmap. Click “Choose Your Interests.” This will take you quickly through an assessment in which you select the things that interest you the most. The results you receive are a customized list of interview videos of professionals talking about their careers, the paths they took to get there, and the pros and cons of those careers. Each video is selected based on the responses you provided in the assessment, but you can browse through the entire library of videos anytime you want.

## O\*Net—My Next Move

At [ONetOnline.org](http://ONetOnline.org) hover over “Find Occupations,” and select “Career Cluster” from the drop-down menu to browse possible jobs. It’s good to take a variety of assessments like these and look for overlapping results. The more repetition and consistency you can find, the better idea you will get of your ideal occupation. The types of things you currently enjoy doing might just lead to your future career.



## Time to Graduate

If you're a senior, your time in high school is almost over. Juniors, sophomores, and freshmen—the clock is ticking away for you. In order to graduate from a Texas high school, you must complete the Foundation High School Graduation Plan which you will find later in this section. Each subject is listed as well as the number of credits you need for each.



Will you attend college or enroll in a technical school? Will you go to a community college or enlist in the military? You have to know what type of career you want to pursue before you can answer these questions. When you research your career of interest using tools like Texas Career Check online, you will learn what the preferred level of education or training is to secure the job you want. That will help you plan your education or training. Knowing what type of career you will work toward after high school can help you create your Graduation Plan and prepare you for that career. In the following pages, you will be introduced to career clusters and other career alternatives. Use the information to help you select classes. As you complete each class, decide if the subject/career is still of interest or if you want to try something different.

### **TIP!**

Don't take courses that you are familiar with just so you can have an "easy" class. Instead, use the opportunity to explore different subjects that may lead to your future career. Ask your counselor about earning college credit for academic classes you can take while in high school. These dual credit courses can save you money, since you won't have to pay for the same credit hours when you go to college. You might also consider technical courses that connect your high school courses with those at a local community college. There's no need to study the same material twice, and participating in a Tech Preparation program allows you to build a career by combining high school and college courses.



## MY PLAN: KOJI

Rate this plan from 1 to 5 stars, with 1 star meaning it needs work and 5 stars as a success. Why did you give this rating?



"Hi, my name is Koji and my plan is to enlist in the Air Force because I really want to fly planes. I am in JROTC at school and am researching what to do to become an Air Force pilot. I visited the Air Force website and was shocked to learn there was more to

the Air Force than flying. They have many different careers. I have talked to a recruiter, and she is helping me through the process. I am working on keeping in shape so when I go to basic training, I will be able to handle anything they throw at me."

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

### "EMOTION OR LOGIC?" ACTIVITY ANSWER KEY

- |                                  |                               |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Alejandro's answer: emotional | 6. Greta's answer: logical    |
| 2. Zeena's answer: emotional     | 7. David's answer: emotional  |
| 3. Mariela's answer: logical     | 8. Jhumpa's answer: emotional |
| 4. Praneel's answer: emotional   | 9. Asher's answer: logical    |
| 5. Hayao's answer: emotional     |                               |

## Graduation Plan

In high school, the graduation requirements are the same for all students, regardless of which endorsement you may pick. Remember, your school district can decide which courses to offer to help you earn your endorsements or meet the state graduation requirements. Check with your school counselor for more information.

COURSES REQUIRED FOR FHSP* CREDITS	FHSP* CREDITS	ENDORSEMENT + FHSP* CREDITS	DISTINGUISHED CREDITS
<b>English</b> English I, II, and III Advanced English course	4	4	4
<b>Math</b> Algebra I Geometry Advanced Math course	3	4 all FHSP +1 advanced Math	4 all FHSP + Algebra II
<b>Science</b> Biology Integrated Physics & Chemistry Advanced Science course	3	4 all FHSP +1 advanced Science	4 all FHSP +1 advanced Science
<b>Social Studies</b> U.S. History U.S. Government (1/2 credit) Economics (1/2 credit) World History or Geography	3	3	3
<b>Physical Education</b>	1	1	1
<b>Languages Other Than English</b> 2 credits in the same language or 2 credits from Computer Science I, II, & III	2	2	2
<b>Fine Arts</b>	1	1	1
<b>Electives</b> Classes available for electives will be based upon the endorsement options selected by the student	5	7	7
<b>Speech</b> Demonstrated proficiency	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL CREDITS</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>26</b>

**\*FHSP:** Foundation High School Program



This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.





# Check us out!



## ADDRESS

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Texas Workforce Commission  
Labor Market & Career Info.  
101 E. 15th St., Room 380  
Austin, TX 78778-0001



## PHONE

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Hotline: 1 (800) 822-7526  
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