



KEY CONCEPTS

- Career research
- Career outlook
- Educational requirements
- Job description
- Working conditions



CLASSROOM MATERIALS

- Handout 5.1
- Handout 8.1
- Handout 8.2 (Non-computer option)
- Handout 8.3
- Paper and pens
- *Occupational Outlook Handbook*

For Additional Activity 5

- Handout 8.4
- *O*NET Dictionary of Occupational Titles*
- Three notebooks, pens, or keychains



CAREER COACH WEBSITE LINKS

- Browse Career Profiles
- Learn More About Your Target Career
- My Interesting Careers

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Through the lesson and related assignments, students will:

- Learn how to use a variety of print and web resources to research careers
- Learn about the educational requirements, responsibilities, outlook, and working conditions of their interesting careers
- Evaluate and narrow interesting careers

LESSON SET-UP

Note: This module contains computer/non-computer options for Activity 2.

For this lesson you will need:

ACTIVITY 1

- Paper and pens

ACTIVITY 2 COMPUTER OPTION

- Students take out **Handout 5.1** from their portfolio.
- Three copies of **Handout 8.1** for each student in your class

ACTIVITY 2 NON-COMPUTER OPTION

- Students take out **Handout 5.1** from their portfolio.
- Three copies of **Handout 8.1** for each student in your class
- Enough copies of **Handout 8.2** for the individual members of each of five groups. (For example, if the class has 15 members: Group 1 has three copies of Dental Hygienist, Group 2 has three copies of Food Services Manager, etc.)
- Several copies of the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* (see page 7)

WRAP-UP

- Enough copies of **Handout 8.3** for each student in your class

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY 5

- Enough copies of **Handout 8.4** for each student in your class
- Several copies of the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* (see page 7)
- Several copies of the *O*Net Dictionary of Occupational Titles* (see page 7)
- Three notebooks, pens, or key chains for prizes

FYI

For more information on:

- Regional median incomes by occupation and hot markets by occupation, see <http://www.careeronestop.org/>
- Job-specific and transferable skills and knowledge by career title, see <http://online.onetcenter.org/>
- Occupational research and how to do it, see http://ilearn.senecac.on.ca/careers/research/researching_occupations.html

Introduction (5 minutes)

1. Review the last lesson, which had students evaluate their lifestyle needs.
2. The assignment had students answer two questions in their notebooks. Ask for two to three volunteers to read the answers to the **second question only** (the first is too personal). If more students want to read their answers, allow it.
 - *How much money do I need to earn support my family and myself?*
 - *What are two lifestyle decisions that will influence my career choice?*
3. Introduce the main point of the lesson. Students will:
 - Learn to use a variety of resources to research their interesting careers.
 - Develop an understanding of the educational requirements, responsibilities, outlook, and working conditions of their interesting careers.
 - Evaluate and narrow their interesting careers.
4. Ask students to write three questions in their notebooks. They will answer these at the end of the session.
 - *What are the educational requirements of my two top careers?*
 - *What important information have I learned about my two top careers?*
 - *Do my values, skills, and lifestyle needs seem to fit my two top careers?*

Learning About Interesting Careers

Background



Explain to students that it is important to know basic information about a career before they start preparing for that career. The purpose of this module is to help students make informed career decisions.

ACTIVITY 1: What's in a Career? (10 minutes)

ROLE-PLAY Ask a student to volunteer to role-play in front of the class; the teacher will be “acting” as a potential employer and the student will be “acting” as a job applicant.

1. Explain that the employer is hiring for the job called “widget technician” (an imaginary job). The job seeker thinks that he/she might be interested in this job, and so she wants to learn more about it. The focus of this role-play is the job-seeker “interviewing” the potential employer about the job.
2. The employer should be sitting at a desk. The “job-seeker” should come in and introduce herself. The employer then starts the conversation by telling the applicant basic information:

A widget technician repairs and maintains all of the widgets in the factory.

ACTIVITY 1: What's in a Career? (cont.)

3. Ask students to write these categories on a piece of paper: Responsibilities, Hours and Travel, Location, Educational Requirements, Salary and Benefits, and Related Jobs and Opportunities for Advancement. Write these topics on the board and make sure that students know what they are before proceeding.

The student should ask questions about each of these categories. The “employer” (the teacher) will make up answers to the question.

Examples

What does the job pay? What are the hours?

4. The goal is to ask questions to obtain the needed information. Make sure that the student asks enough questions to cover each category. If the student does not come up with enough questions, ask the class to come up with others.
5. After the role-play, ask students to list other types of information they need to know about a career in order to make an informed career choice on the blackboard.
6. Review the information students need to find when researching interesting careers:
- **Educational requirements:** the level of school, training, or degree required, including professional association or state requirements like certification or accreditation
 - **Salary and benefits:** what does the job pay and what benefits (health care, retirement plan, tuition reimbursements) are provided
 - **Job description:** the kind of work they will do, (customer service, writing, project work etc.) and the daily tasks they will perform
 - **Working conditions:** what the workplace will be like, such as physical labor, working hours, and working outside
 - **Employment opportunities:** other jobs in the career field that are of interest, promotional opportunities, industry growth, availability of career in local area
 - **Other:** restrictions on working in certain industries for ex-offenders, etc.

Researching Interesting Careers

Following are two alternative activities for *Activity 2: Researching Interesting Careers*.

Use *Activity 2, Option A* if your students have access to the *Career Coach* website in the classroom.

Use *Activity 2, Option B* if your students do not have Internet or computer access in the classroom

ACTIVITY 2, Option A: Researching Interesting Careers (25 minutes)

Students will research their interesting careers using the *Career Coach* website and other websites.



Students take out **Handout 5.1** from their portfolios



Pass out two copies of **Handout 8.1**

**Option A Computer**

1. Explain to students that they will now research more detailed information about their interesting careers. Ask students to take out copies of **Handout 5.1** and select the two careers that have the most stars written next to them. Tell students that for today these will be their two top careers, but that they may change these at the end of the lesson.
2. Pass out two copies of **Handout 8.1: Researching Interesting Careers** to each student in the class. On the first copy of **Handout 8.1**, ask students to write the career that most interests them from the two they chose from **Handout 5.1**. Tell students to write the other career on the second copy of **Handout 8.1**.
3. Explain to students that they will now be using the *Career Coach* website to research their interesting careers in more detail.
4. Tell students to go to www.womenemployed.org/CareerCoach
 - They should click on the *Career Coach* picture.
 - They should sign in to the *Career Coach* website using their user name and password.
 - They should then click on Browse Career Profiles.
5. In Browse Career Profiles, have students find the career profile for the first career they wrote down on **Handout 8.1**, and find details on their top career choice.
6. To get the students started, have them fill in the first two lines of **Handout 8.1** — Job Title and Median or Average Annual Salary. Then have them find one example to fill in the area titled Job Description. Make sure that each person knows what he/she is doing before completing the handout. Be available to answer questions as students work through the process.
7. Give students enough time to fill in the first copy of **Handout 8.1**. Ask students if this exercise has made this career more or less interesting to them.
8. Explain that the purpose of this activity is to help them decide if this is a good target career for them. After learning these details about the job they may want to find out more or choose a different career from those listed on **Handout 5.1**
9. If there is time in class, students can complete **Handout 8.1** for their second top career from the website. Otherwise, they can complete it as an assignment and keep it in their portfolios.

ACTIVITY 2, Option B: Practice Researching Interesting Careers (25 minutes)

RESEARCH Explain that the purpose of this activity is to learn how to research a target career. Later they will have a chance to research their own top career choices. In this activity they will learn how to practice the skills they need.



Pass out one copy of **Handout 8.1**

Pass out copies of one job description from **Handout 8.2** to each group.

Option B Non-Computer

1. Divide students into five groups and ask them to work together to research the career you assign to them.
2. Distribute one copy of **Handout 8.1: Researching Interesting Careers** to each student. (You will pass out the other copies later.)
3. Distribute enough copies of one job description from **Handout 8.2: Careers to Research** for the individual members of each of five groups. (For example, if the class has 15 members, Group 1 will get three copies of Dental Hygienist; Group 2 will get three copies of Food Services Manager, etc.)
4. Explain to students that the *Career Coach* website is an excellent source for information on different careers. Tell them that if they complete the Interest Inventory quiz, the *Career Coach* website will provide career profiles in fields with lots of job openings and good salaries.
5. Explain to students that today the class will use information from one of the sources used by the *Career Coach* website, the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*.
6. It is highly recommended that one or more copies of the *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2006-2007* (or later version) is available to students. (See page xx for information about how to obtain.) Show students how to find specific jobs by using the occupational categories (table of contents) or by job title (index).
7. Direct students to use the handouts and resource materials to research one of the following careers assigned to them:
 - Group 1: Dental Hygienist
 - Group 2: Food Services Manager
 - Group 3: Computer Support Specialist
 - Group 4: Graphic Designer
 - Group 5: Correctional Officer
8. Direct students to work together with their group members to read and review the information on their assigned career.
9. To get the students started, have them fill in the first line of **Handout 8.1** — Job Title. Then have them find one example to fill in the section titled Job Description. Make sure that each group knows what they are doing before they complete the handout. Be available to answer questions as they work through the process.

ACTIVITY 2, Option B: Practice Researching Interesting Careers (cont.)

Pass out two copies of **Handout 8.1**



Students take out **Handout 5.1**

Ask students:

- *What was important to you in the career research?*
- *What are the advantages of using career research to help you figure out what career you want to follow?*

10. Mention that one of their out-of-class assignments will be to research their two top career choices using the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* and the *Career Coach* website in the same way.
11. Pass out two copies of **Handout 8.1**. Tell students to take out **Handout 5.1** and pick the two careers that have the most stars written next to them. Ask students to write these careers at the top of **Handout 8.1**. These will be their careers to research. Explain to students that they may change these career choices in the next class if they are not happy with the results of their research.

Other Methods of Career Research**Background**

Explain to students that there are many different ways to research careers. There are many websites and books with information on different occupations in addition to other ways to research careers.

Example

Average salaries can be very different depending on the location and company. To find out the average or median income for a career in their region of the country, students may want to visit a website such as <http://www.jobbankinfo.org/>. To find out about average salaries by company, they can search the company's website for open positions or ask about salary ranges in an informational interview.

ACTIVITY 3: Other Methods of Career Research (5 minutes)

BRAINSTORM This activity can be done as a class or by breaking students into groups of three or four members.

1. Ask students:

What other ways can you use to research a career?

Examples

Internship – work in an informal position in the same career field

Starter Job – work a job in the same field or place as your career goal

Job Shadowing – observe someone in your target career field in their daily work

Informational Interviewing – talk to someone already working in the same career field

Volunteering – volunteer in a field to get a better understanding of the work

Talk to friends and relatives

Talk to teachers and career counselors

Wrap-Up and Assignments (5 minutes)



Pass out **Handout 8.3**

Pass out an additional copy of **Handout 8.1**



1. Review the main points of the module. This lesson introduced students to researching careers. In the process, they learned how to find out the general educational requirements of their top career choices, which they should keep in mind as they progress with their career planning.
2. Remind students that they wrote three questions in their notebooks. Have them write answers to the questions and bring the answers to the next class.
 - *What are the educational requirements of my two top careers?*
 - *What important information have I learned about my two top careers?*
 - *Do my values, skills, and lifestyle needs seem to fit my two top careers?*
3. Distribute **Handout 8.3: Resources for Career Research**. Tell students that if they haven't already done so they need to complete research on two careers for the next session.
 - **Students who researched careers on the Career Coach website in class** should finish the two copies of **Handout 8.1** they have begun work on. Hand out another copy of **Handout 8.1** if students wish to research another career.
 - **Students who have access to the Career Coach website outside of class** should fill out two copies of **Handout 8.1** for next time based on their top two career choices. They should:
 - * Go to Career Profiles on the *Career Coach* website to research careers
 - * Browse Career Profiles to read descriptions
 - **Students who are not computer literate or do not have any access to the Internet inside or outside of class:**
 - * Should take out **Handout 5.1** and choose two careers to research.
 - * Should go to a library to use the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* or other resources listed on **Handout 8.3: Resources for Career Research**.
4. For homework, remind students to go to <http://www.jobbankinfo.org/> to find the regional median salaries for their top careers before they fill in that part of **Handout 8.1**. They can compare the regional median salaries with their budget needs from Module 7 to help them decide if this career would be a good fit. They can also compare their lifestyle needs and values with other parts of the worksheet.
5. Copies of **Handout 8.1** should go into students' portfolios.

Additional Activities

You may choose to substitute one of these activities for an activity in the lesson or to use any of them as time permits.

Additional ACTIVITY 4: Visiting a Career Resource Center

SITE VISIT Arrange a class visit and tour of the career resources and facilities at a local career resource center such as:

- State Department of Employment Center: CareerOneStop Center
- Career services office at the local community college
- Career services office at the closest area college or university
- Career resources center at the local public library

The career development specialists in these facilities should be very knowledgeable and experienced in conducting these tours and introducing students to the career resources that are available for occupational research.

If there is time after the tour, have students use the career resources in the center to complete research on their careers or **Activity 5: Career Scavenger Hunt**. (below)

Additional ACTIVITY 5: Career Scavenger Hunt

GAME Divide student into groups of three.



Pass out **Handout 8.4**

1. Give each group one copy of **Handout 8.4: Career Scavenger Hunt**, one copy of *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2006-2007*, and one copy of the *O*NET Dictionary of Occupational Titles*. (Students can also use **Handout 8.3: Resources for Career Research**.)
2. Explain to students that the purpose of the scavenger hunt is to practice career research. Their assignment is to use resource materials to find the career information requested on **Handout 8.4**. Tell students that the two pieces of information they should provide are:
 - the requested career information
 - where the career information can be located

The first group members to complete the activity win a small prize, such as a pen, a notebook, a key chain, etc.



Handout 8.1: Researching Interesting Careers

Write information about one interesting career here.

1. Job title: _____

2. Median or average annual salary: _____

Homework: Regional median annual salary: _____

3. Job description: List two or three duties or responsibilities of this career.

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

4. Working conditions: List two to three facts about working conditions in this career.

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

5. Employment: List two facts about where people work in this career.

- 1. _____
- 2. _____

6. Education and training: List two to three facts related to education or training in this career.

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

7. Skills: List two to three skills needed in this career.

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

Do you need a license to work in this career? Yes No

If yes, what license do you need to work in this career? _____

Handout 8.2: Careers to Research

Non-Computer Option

Group 1: Dental Hygienist

Significant Points:

Job growth for dental hygienists is very promising. There are more people who have their original teeth. They will need more dental hygienists to care for them. Opportunities for part-time work and flexible schedules are common.

Nature of the Work:

Dental hygienists remove soft and hard deposits from teeth. They teach patients how to practice good oral hygiene and help with other dental care. Hygienists look at patients' teeth and gums. They write down anything that may be wrong. Hygienists take and develop dental x-rays. They apply fluorides and sealants to help keep cavities away. Some hygienists can prepare tests for the dentist to explain to patients. Hygienists sometimes work chair-side with the dentist during treatment.

Dental hygienists help patients learn good oral health. They may explain how diet affects oral health. They also tell patients how to choose toothbrushes and show them how to brush and floss their teeth.

Working Conditions:

A unique feature of this job is flexible scheduling. Full-time, part-time, evening, and weekend schedules are widely available. Dentists frequently hire hygienists to work only two or three days a week. Hygienists may hold jobs in more than one dental office.

Dental hygienists work in clean, well-lit offices. They must use safety procedures when taking x-rays or giving anesthetic. Dental hygienists also wear surgical masks and gloves to protect themselves and patients from germs.

Employment:

Almost all dental hygienists work in private dental offices. More than half of the hygienists work part time—less than 35 hours a week.

Education and Training:

Dental hygienists must be licensed by the state in which they work. To qualify for a license, a student must graduate from an accredited dental hygiene school and must pass both a written and clinical test. The American Dental Association Joint Commission on National Dental Examinations gives the written test. State or local testing agencies give the clinical test. There may also be a test on legal aspects of dental hygiene work.

An associate degree is sufficient for working in a private dental office. About half of the dental hygiene programs would like people who have completed at least one year of college. High school students interested in becoming a dental hygienist should take courses in science and math.

Dental hygienists should work well with others. Because they use dental tools within a patient's mouth, they must work well with their hands.

Median Average Annual Salary

\$47,096 (based on a 30 hour work week; varies by wage and hours.)

Handout 8.2: Careers to Research

Non-Computer Option

Group 2: Food Service Manager

Significant Points:

Food and beverage preparation and service workers may be promoted to food service managers. This happens when they have enough experience. A bachelor's or associate degree is helpful. A degree in restaurant and institutional food service management is useful. Many new jobs will be in eating and drinking businesses. Job chances should be better for salaried managers. Opportunities for self-employed managers will be as good.

Managers should be willing to move often. They advance to jobs with more responsibility. Managers usually move on to larger companies. They may also advance to local management jobs. They advance to jobs within restaurant chains. Some open their own eating and drinking businesses. Others move to hotel management jobs. Their job experience prepares them for management jobs in hotels and resorts.

Nature of the Work:

Food service managers select and price menu items. They use food and other supplies efficiently. They achieve quality in food preparation and service. Managers often do administrative and human resource tasks.

Their daily tasks are as follows:

- Estimate the amount of food eaten by customers
- Place orders with suppliers
- Schedule the delivery of fresh food and beverages
- Receive and check the content of deliveries
- Evaluate the quality of the food
- Arrange for equipment maintenance and repairs
- Organize services such as waste removal and pest control
- Interview, hire, and fire employees and schedule hours
- Explain procedures to new employees

Other responsibilities are:

- Supervise the kitchen and dining room
- Look into and settle customer complaints
- Direct the cleaning of the kitchen and dining
- Monitor the actions of employees and patrons
- Tally the cash and charge receipts and balance them against the sales record
- Lock up; check that ovens, grills, and lights are off; and switch on alarm systems

Working Conditions:

Night and weekend work is common among managers. This is because popular dining times are during evenings and weekends. Many managers of institutional food service facilities work hours that are more regular. This is because factory and office cafeterias are usually open only on weekdays for breakfast and lunch. However, hours for many managers are irregular. This is because managers may have to fill in for absent workers. They may need to fill in on short notice. It is common for food service managers to work 50 or more hours per week. It is common for the manager to work seven days a week, and 12 to 15 hours per day.

Group 2: Food Service Manager (cont.)

Managers must organize a wide range of activities, often at the same time. It is the duty of the manager to resolve problems. They must solve problems with the least trouble to customers. The job can be hectic during peak dining hours. Also, it can be stressful dealing with irritated customers or difficult employees.

Employment:

Many food service managers work in restaurants. A large number of managers work in contract institutional food service companies. Jobs are located throughout the country. Large cities and tourist areas offer more chances for full-service dining jobs.

Education and Training:

Most food service management companies hire management trainees. Restaurant chains also hire trainees. They are hired from two- and four-year college hospitality management programs. Food service and restaurant chains would rather hire people with degrees. They usually hire those with degrees in restaurant and institutional food service management. However, they often hire graduates with other degrees. They hire people who have shown interest and talent. Waiters, waitresses, chefs, and fast-food workers sometimes advance in their careers. They advance to assistant manager jobs. They also advance to management trainee jobs. They do this if they have shown that they can handle more tasks. Executive chefs need a lot of experience working as chefs. General managers need experience as assistant managers.

A bachelor's degree in restaurant and food service management gives a strong basis for a job in this career. Many colleges offer four-year programs in restaurant and hotel management. They also offer programs in institutional food service management. Community and junior colleges offer two-year degrees. Technical institutes and other institutions also offer two-year programs in these fields. A two-year program can lead to an associate degree or other formal certification. Also, many schools offer cooking programs. These programs give training in preparing food. This training can lead to a career as a cook or chef. This training can give a basis for a job as an executive chef.

Most restaurant chains and food service management companies have strict training programs for management jobs. Trainees get instruction and work experience. They get classroom and on-the-job training. Trainees get their first permanent job after six months to a year. Their first job is an assistant manager.

Average Annual Salary

\$35,790

Source: Career Coach website at www.womenemployed.org

Handout 8.2: Careers to Research

Non-Computer Option

Group 3: Computer Support Specialist

Significant Points:

Increased use of computers has created high demand for specialists to help users. These workers maintain and support systems and networks. Computer support specialists give technical help. They can be technical support specialists and help desk technicians. These workers solve problems with hardware, software, and systems. Specialists work in companies that use computer systems. They also may work for a computer hardware or software seller. These specialists often work for help desk or support services firms. They are contracted to give computer support.

Nature of the Work:

Specialists help other employees with computers. They install, update, and fix hardware and software. They also may work on monitors, keyboards, and printers. Specialists answer calls from users. They run programs to fix problems. They also may write training manuals. Specialists often train people to use new products. They oversee the daily performance of a company's computers.

Help desk technicians help users with product questions. Manuals may not have all the answers. These workers get calls and e-mails from customers. They must listen carefully to customers to understand the problem. Then, they help customers fix the problem. They give companies feedback on their products. Most specialists start at the help desk.

Network or computer systems administrators design, install, and support a company's computer networks. They may also help with the Internet or intranet system. They support software users. These workers may be in offices and small businesses. They also may work for the government and large corporations. These workers maintain hardware and software. They also study and prevent problems. Administrators make sure people can use the network. They collect data to see what users need from networks. These workers also may plan network security. Administrators make sure a company's network runs well. They suggest improvements for the future.

Working Conditions:

Specialists and administrators usually work in well-lit, comfortable offices. They may also work in computer labs. They usually work 40 hours a week. They may give extra support on evenings or weekends. These workers may work overtime on problems. They sit at computers all day. This can cause eyestrain and back pain. It also can cause hand and wrist problems.

Specialists and administrators work with people often. Consultants are away from their offices a lot. They may work for months in a client's office. Specialists may connect to a customer's computer from their office. This reduces travel.

Employment:

Most of these workers are computer support specialists. Many are network and computer systems administrators. Most work in business services. The services are mainly computer and data process services. Others work in banks, government, insurance companies, and educational institutions. Many also work for computer sellers and manufacturers. Many more specialists now work in areas where computers were not used before.

Group 3: Computer Support Specialist (cont.)

Education and Training:

This job requires a two-year associate degree. These degree programs are usually offered at community colleges. This will help you prepare for a specific job or a four-year college.

Many employers prefer people with a college education. A bachelor's degree in computer science or information systems is common. Other jobs may require only an associate degree. This should be in a computer subject. Many companies are flexible about degrees. This is because of the high demand for workers. Those without degrees need certification and experience.

Average Annual Salary:

\$39,100

Handout 8.2: Careers to Research

Non-Computer Option

Group 4: Graphic Designer

Significant Points:

Designers are people who create. They combine knowledge with artistic ability. They turn ideas into real designs. The things we buy and where we live and work start with design. Designers often work in a particular area of design. There are many areas of specialty, such as packaging, industrial, clothing, architectural, or home interior design.

To develop a new design or change one, the designer finds out what the client needs and wants. A designer must also know how the design will be used. They must know what customers like.

Nature of the Work:

Designers draw sketches by hand or with a computer. After meeting with the client, they create a more detailed design. Most designers use computer design tools

Graphic designers use print, electronic, and film to create designs for their clients. Using computers, they develop the layout and design of various publications. They also may produce promotional materials, design company logos, and develop signs. Graphic designers work with Web pages and design the credits that run on TV and in movies.

Working Conditions:

Designers employed by corporations work regular hours. They work in well-lit and comfortable settings. Self-employed designers may work longer hours.

Designers who work on a contract basis adjust their workday to their clients' schedules. They may do business in their offices or in clients' homes or offices. They may also have to travel.

Graphic designers may work extra hours to meet deadlines.

Employment:

Graphic designers are needed more in some cities, than in others. About one-third of designers are self-employed. The rest work for companies such as advertising firms, non-profits, book publishers, and magazines.

Education and Training:

This job usually requires a bachelor's degree from a four-year school. You need a high school diploma or an associate degree to get into a four-year school.

Many employers expect new designers to know about computer-aided design.

Beginning designers may receive on-the-job training. They need one to three years of training before they can move on to higher-level positions.

Average Annual Salary:

\$36,680

Handout 8.2: Careers to Research

Non-Computer Option

Group 5: Correctional Officers

Nature of the Work:

Correctional officers watch over people who are waiting for a trial. They are also called detention officers. They also watch over inmates after they are found guilty. They try to keep inmates safe and make sure that they behave. They stop them from escaping.

Correctional officers mostly work in jails and prisons. There are always people entering and leaving jail. Correctional officers process them when they get there and when they leave. They make sure that all inmates follow the rules. They watch to see if people are trying to escape or hide drugs or weapons. They check inmates' mail. They report inmates who break the rules.

Officers usually work without a gun. If there is a problem, all of the other officers go quickly to the site of the problem. They can watch very dangerous inmates on video. Officers take prisoners to different locations outside the prison, such as court.

Working Conditions:

Correctional institutions can be stressful. They are also dangerous. Sometimes inmates fight and hurt officers. Officers must work inside or outside. The buildings vary. Some are well-lit and have air conditioning. Others are old, hot, and noisy. They may be overcrowded. Officers usually work eight hours a day. They work five days a week. Someone must be watching the prisons at all hours. That is why officers rotate their shifts. Sometimes they have to work overtime or holidays.

Employment:

Correctional officers work for city, county, state, and federal prisons; prison camps; and youth correctional facilities. They may transport inmates to different locations, such as court.

Education and Training:

Most prisons hire officers who are at least 18. They must be U.S. citizens with a high school education. They cannot work if they have committed a crime. A college education can get officers promoted. They need to be healthy and smart. Officers also receive on-the-job training. Officers need to learn self-defense skills. Sometimes they have to know how to use a gun.

Those who train at academies learn about rules, regulations, and security. Officers working at a federal prison have to do 200 hours of training.

Some are trained to be a part of a special team. These officers know how to stop riots, move prisoners, and perform other dangerous duties. Supervisors are called correctional sergeants. Sergeants need education and experience. With a lot of experience, officers can be promoted to other jobs, including prison wardens.

Average Annual Salary:

\$32,710

Handout 8.3: Resources for Career Research

Career Research

You can use the Internet or written materials to find information on the duties and responsibilities, work environment, required education and skills, salary and outlook, and related occupations for target careers.

- The *Career Coach* Website – <http://www.womenemployed.org>
- *Occupational Outlook Handbook* On-line – <http://www.bls.gov/oco/>
- O*Net Website – <http://www.doleta.gov/programs/onet/>
- *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2006-2007 Edition*. JIST Publishing: Indianapolis, IN. 2006. U.S. Department of Labor Elaine L. Chao, Secretary. Bureau of Labor Statistics and Bureau of Labor Statistics, Kathleen P. Utgoff, Commissioner
- *O*Net Dictionary of Occupational Titles, second Edition*. JIST Publishing: Indianapolis, IN. 2002. (Based on information obtained from U.S. Department of Labor, the U.S. Census Bureau, and other reliable sources. Developed under the direction of J. Michael Farr and LaVerne L. Ludden, Ed.D., with database work by Laurence Shatkin, Ph.D. Also available at <http://online.onetcenter.org/crosswalk/>)

Additional Web Resources for Career Research

America's Career InfoNet – <http://www.acinet.org/>

Bureau of Labor Statistics Data – <http://www.bls.gov/data/>

Career Voyages – <http://www.careervoyages.gov/>

Career Overview – <http://www.careeroverview.com/>

Vocational Biographies – <http://www.virtualjobshadow.com>

Online Career Center – <http://www.occ.com>

Salary Information – <http://www.salary.com/>

Handout 8.4: Career Scavenger Hunt

Use **Handout 8.3: Resources for Career Research** to identify the resources you can use to locate the information requested below. Your answers should include two parts: 1) the career information requested, and 2) where you found the career information.

- Name two to three duties that a registered nurse is qualified to do.

Describe where this career information was found.

- Describe the job outlook for police officers.

Describe where this career information was found.

- Name the level of education required to be a pharmacist.

Describe where this career information was found.

- List the median annual earning for a paralegal.

Describe where this career information was found.

- List the education that is needed to be a high school teacher.

Describe where this career information was found.

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- List the hourly wage for an entry-level accountant.

Describe where this career information was found.

- Name two disadvantages of being a social worker.

Describe where this career information was found.

- Name three responsibilities of a meeting planner.

Describe where this career information was found.

- Describe the working conditions and job outlook for surgical technologists.

Describe where this career information was found.

- List two benefits of being a civil engineering technician.

Describe where this career information was found.
