

I'm about to complete High School...Now what?

You have already acquired many skills that will serve you in life and prepare you for the future. For example, your interest in music could evolve into a career in studio production. Your interests in sports could lead you toward becoming a fitness trainer, or even the next great Golf Course designer. Your interest in art or video games could lead you toward a career in digital media. Your own unique interests provide the gateway during this important transition. Let's start with exploring your interests.

Prepare your life resume

The questions below require some thought. The answers to these questions are your life resume. For each question, take some scrap paper and jot down whatever comes to mind.

Take your time!

1. Life Experience

Never underestimate the importance of your experience! This is where life happens.

List 5 of your favorite life experiences.

E.g., provincial or national championship, lived in other countries or areas of the world, sports or sporting events, lived on a farm, pets, camps, concerts, fundraising, etc.

2. Work/volunteer experience

List 5 Work/Volunteer Experiences. List any paid or unpaid jobs you have done, even those that you have done for any relatives or neighbors. *E.g., cutting your neighbor's lawn counts as job experience and shows you have taken on responsibility*

3. Education

List your Educational Highlights

Describe any classes that you really enjoyed. Don't worry if your grades were not that good.

Many really successfully people in this world did NOT do well in school but found what they really enjoyed doing and made a career out of it.

If you could attend any university/college or other learning environment in the world what would it be? Why?

4. Choose a career

People acquire skills in all kinds of creative ways through school, jobs and volunteering.

A choice that makes sense today may not apply tomorrow, but that's ok.

Talk to adults. Ask if they can remember what they were thinking at this stage in their lives. What were some of their challenges? How did they address these? What ultimately led them to where they are today? You will find more often than not that very few people knew 'what they wanted to be when they grow up'.

1. Pursue Higher Education:

- **University and Colleges.**

The focus is on academics. They teach you how to think both creatively and analytically. Going away for school can be fun and another life experience in itself!

Technical School, Trade School, & Career College: There are many wonderful careers that can emerge out of trades and technical schools.

E.g., study film, art, music, learn how to start a business, become a veterinarian or hospital technician, etc.

2. Pursue Non-Academic Interests

Higher education is not for everyone and many very successful people did not attend university. Going out on your own is a great way to gain experience and to sort out what you want to pursue full time!

- **Job Shadow:** Think of things you already like to do or might want to do. Find someone who is doing that and ask if you can “shadow” or volunteer for them.

- **Business Ventures:** You may have an excellent idea for a business to start. Have you ever written a business plan? Do you know how to finance this venture? Ask yourself 100 questions you will need to answer about your idea and once you have all of the answers you will know what it takes to bring this idea to market.

- **Travel Abroad:** Seek advice from others who have traveled. Where would you like to explore most? What experiences would you hope to gain? Consider exploring opportunities to volunteer or work abroad. Find out if companies or organizations that you already know and like have opportunities abroad (volunteer or employment). If you love traveling, there could be a career there for you!

Set your goals!

Even if you know what interests you, where do you go from here? A goal-oriented approach is important for moving forward. Goals serve to direct your attention purposefully. Goals can be changed and modified when appropriate but you should always write your goals down as SMART goals.

Goal-setting task

1. Describe 2 **short-term goals** that will help you with direction over the next couple of weeks. This could involve looking into university or community programs, setting up one job shadowing opportunity, or writing a cover letter.
2. Describe 2 **long-term goals** that will help you with direction over the next year. This could involve applying to a program within the next year or setting up job shadowing opportunities in areas that are of interest to you.

Useful web links:

1. Read about how to choose between University/College and a Technical/Trade Education:
<http://www.top-colleges.com/blog/2007/02/07/university-or-career-college-which-should-you-attend/>
<http://teenadvice.about.com/od/teenlifefaqsandqas/a/postgradchoices.htm>
2. How to find a mentor: http://www.quintcareers.com/mentor_value.html
3. Job Shadowing: <http://jobshadow.monster.com/career/>
4. Job Resources for Teens: www.groovejob.com
5. Enjoying the Journey:
<http://www.stevepavlina.com/blog/2005/02/enjoying-the-journey/>