

Other Educational Paths

The **BIG** Idea

- What are the benefits and things to consider for various one- and two-year programs, apprenticeships, and the military?

AGENDA

Approx. 45 minutes

- I. Warm Up (5 minutes)
- II. Researching Postsecondary Options (20–25 minutes)
- III. Apprenticeship/Military Focus (10–15 minutes)
- IV. Wrap Up (5 minutes)

MATERIALS

STUDENT HANDBOOK PAGES:

- Student Handbook page 129, Other Options After High School
- Student Handbook pages 130-131, Researching Postsecondary Options
- Student Handbook page 132, Apprenticeship Focus: Becoming an Electrician
- Student Handbook page 133, U.S. Armed Forces Focus: Joining the Army

FACILITATOR PAGES:

- Facilitator Resource 1, Postsecondary Options Summaries
- Facilitator Resource 2, Postsecondary Options Websites

- Overhead projector

OBJECTIVES

During this lesson, the student(s) will:

- Recognize that there are multiple paths to similar careers.
- Describe the differences between those paths.
- Compare the job training offered in one- and two-year programs.

OVERVIEW

Students explore postsecondary educational options other than four-year colleges: technical and trade programs, community colleges, apprenticeships, and the military. Students discuss what each option offers, its benefits, and things to consider. In addition, they visit websites to answer questions about a specific apprenticeship program and the U.S. Army.

PREPARATION

- Make arrangements for the class to use the computer lab, and make sure the NAJTC and Army websites are accessible from students' computers.
- List the day's **BIG IDEA** and activities on the board.
- Write the day's vocabulary and definitions on the board.
- For each of your classes, make 10 copies of **Facilitator Resource 1, Postsecondary Options Summaries** for students to use in **Activity II, Researching Postsecondary Options**.
- Make a class set of **Facilitator Resource 2, Postsecondary Options Websites** to give to students who are interested in pursuing one of these options.
- The following handouts need to be made into overhead transparencies or copied onto chart paper:
 - **Student Handbook pages 130-131, Researching Postsecondary Options**
 - **Student Handbook page 132, Apprenticeship Focus: Becoming an Electrician**
 - **Student Handbook page 133, U.S. Armed Forces Focus: Joining the Army**

The following websites will provide helpful background information when preparing for this lesson, as well as links for students who wish to pursue these options:

GENERAL

FastWeb: Types of Schools

<http://www.fastweb.com/fastweb/resources/articles/index/100036?>

Accreditation of Postsecondary Education in the United States

http://www.graduateguide.com/accreditation_of_postsecondary_education_in_the_united_states.html

COMMUNITY COLLEGES

American Association of Community Colleges (See “About Community Colleges” or “Community College Finder”)

<http://www.aacc.nche.edu>

Five Myths About Community Colleges

<http://www.fastweb.com/fastweb/resources/articles/index/110262?>

TECH/TRADE SCHOOLS (CAREER COLLEGES)

Fast Web: All About Career Schools

<http://www.fastweb.com/fastweb/resources/articles/index/104163?>

Accrediting Council of Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS)

<http://www.acics.org>

APPRENTICESHIPS

U.S. Department of Labor: Benefits for Registered Apprenticeships (also see “Finding a Program”)

http://www.doleta.gov/oa/apprentices_new.cfm

Apprenticeship Training Resources

<http://www.khake.com/page58.html>

North Dakota Apprenticeships

<http://www.workforce.nd.gov/programs/apprenticeship/>

National Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee: Apprenticeship Training (Electrical Industry Careers)

<http://www.njatc.org/training/apprenticeship/index.aspx>

U.S. ARMED FORCES

United States Army: <http://www.goarmy.com>

United States Air Force: <http://www.airforce.com/>

United States Navy: <http://www.navy.com/>

United States Marine Corps: <http://www.marines.com/>

United States Coast Guard: <http://www.gocoastguard.com/>

Army National Guard: <http://www.1800goguard.com/>

Air National Guard: <http://www.goang.com/>

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Postsecondary education has become a necessity in today's workforce. According to America's Career Resource Network, 48 out of 50 of the fastest-growing jobs in the United States require some sort of education after high school.* While many students (and parents) perceive traditional four-year colleges as the only legitimate form of higher education, there are many other acceptable and accessible forms of postsecondary education, including community college and career/technical schools. These schools are becoming critical providers of job training, both for degree seekers and for students whose goals are to refine and broaden their skills. For some students, these options may in fact be a better match for reasons ranging from career goals to economics. It is also important to recognize that higher education is a two-way street: schools need to make a decision about whether a student is a good match, but a student also needs to decide whether the school is a good match – they need to “accept” each other.

* SOURCE: <http://acrn.ovae.org/parents/afterHS.htm>

VOCABULARY

Accreditation: Official approval of a program after a school has met specific requirements.

Apprenticeship: A position in which a recent graduate receives on-the-job training and classroom instruction, sometimes with pay.

Associate Degree: A two-year degree, usually earned at a community college.

Baccalaureate Degree: A four-year degree from a college or university. Also referred to as a bachelor's degree.

Career & Technical School: A school that provides training in occupational or vocational areas. Many offer technical programs that prepare students for immediate entry into the job market.

Community College: Two-year colleges that offer a degree after the completion of two years of full-time study.

Financial Aid: Scholarships, grants, loans, and other assistance programs that help pay for tuition and other postsecondary school expenses.

Journey Worker: Skilled, certified worker in a trade, craft, or occupation who is recognized by a state or federal agency as fully qualified.

Licensed: Legally permitted to operate.

Postsecondary Education: Schooling after high school that includes programs at technical colleges, community colleges, and four-year colleges.

IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS

In the **Warm Up**, you may prefer to introduce the topic, then present **Student Handbook page 129, Other Options After High School**.

ACTIVITY STEPS

I. Warm Up (5 minutes)

1. To begin this lesson, as students enter the classroom, refer them to **Student Handbook page 129, Other Options After High School**. Give students about three minutes to complete the activity.
2. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Welcome, everybody. This week, we're going to continue our unit on Education After High School. In a couple of weeks, we're going to begin re-searching four-year colleges. But before we begin that research, we're going to spend the next two classes looking at other educational options you can pursue after high school. These include one- or two-year programs like community college, tech schools, and trade schools. We're also going to discuss apprenticeships and the military. As we cover this topic, there are a few things I'd like you to keep in mind:
 - Even if you're set on attending four-year college, this might be a viable step on your path to college.
 - If you're not planning on pursuing education after high school, you may end up choosing this path at some point in order to gain critical skills for the workplace.
 - Today, there are many jobs available for people with mid-level skills, skills obtained through one- and two-year programs. This is a path toward many careers.

II. Researching Postsecondary Options (20-25 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** You often hear about the importance of pursuing education after high school. Well, it's true — as many as 96% of today's fastest-growing jobs require education after high school, or **postsecondary education**. However, this does not necessarily mean you need to go to a traditional four-year school, which is what most people think of when they hear the word "college." Depending on what kind of a career you are considering, the kind of school you need varies. In other words, not all jobs require the same type or amount of education. Some jobs require one- or two-year degrees. Some of these programs typically train you in specific jobs, like computer programming, auto repair, nursing, etc. Others bridge your education between high school and a traditional four-year college or university.
2. Ask students to explain what they know about community college, tech/trade schools, apprenticeships and the U.S. armed forces. Record their answers on chart paper, using a different piece of paper for each option.

3. Assign each student to a group of four.
4. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** In a few minutes each of you are going to become an expert about one of the options we just discussed. In this next activity, you are going to work in your groups of four to “jigsaw” a reading about the four options we just discussed. This means that you are going to divide the reading four ways so that each person reads about a different education option. Then each of you will take turns teaching the rest of your group members about the option you read.

You will have seven minutes to independently read your summary and record the most important information onto **Student Handbook pages 130-131, Researching Postsecondary Options**. Then you will have eight minutes for all four members of your groups to take turns teaching, while their group members take notes on **Student Handbook pages 130-131, Researching Postsecondary Options**. Any questions?

Give each group one copy of **Facilitator Resource 1, Postsecondary Options Summaries**. Circulate around the room, assisting any students who need help. After 15 minutes bring the class together and discuss the students’ findings. Make sure to fill in any gaps or missing information.

III. Apprenticeship/Military Focus (10-15 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Let’s spend a few minutes on additional strategies for those of you who are considering the military. You may find it helpful to do the following:
 - Visit with friends, neighbors, and relatives who have served in various branches of the armed forces.
 - Study the military literature available in your counseling office.
 - Evaluate any physical limitations that might prevent you from serving in the armed forces.
 - Compare military training opportunities with possible civilian occupations.
 - Arrange with your counselor to visit with various military recruiters during your junior and senior years of high school. When meeting with recruiters, listen very carefully, ask tons of questions, and ask to see all the details in writing.
 - Compare benefits, tours of duty, training, and promotion opportunities of military programs.

2. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Note that you may enter the military as an **enlisted** person right out of high school. If you want to enter as a **commissioned officer**, you'll need more training after high school, either through a military school like West Point (which is very competitive) or through an ROTC (Reserve Officers Training Corps) program at the college you attend.
3. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** For this next activity, you will have a choice of taking a closer look at one of the two following options: apprenticeship or military service. Before you make your decision let's take a look at each one. Please turn to your **Student Handbook page 132, Apprenticeship Focus: Becoming an Electrician**. In this activity, you'll imagine that you are considering a career in the electrical industry. Many skilled electrical workers in the country receive their training through an apprenticeship program provided by the National Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee (NJATC). Apprentices in this program earn money while they're learning valuable skills in the electrical trade.
4. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Now, let's take a closer look at your second option. Please turn to your **Student Handbook page 133, Apprenticeship Focus: Joining the Army**. In this activity, you'll imagine that you are considering joining the U.S. army after high school. You'll visit the army website at www.goarmy.com and answer the questions.
5. Allow students to complete one of the two Student Handbook pages listed above. Students can work individually or in pairs. After 10 minutes bring the class back together and have a discussion about what they found.

IV. Wrap Up (5 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Keep in mind that for many careers, there is no one perfect educational pathway. Often there's more than one way to reach a career goal. For example, say your career goal requires a four-year degree, but you don't have the resources or grades to start at a four-year college. You could get a two-year degree at a community college, and then move on to a four-year school. It's a way of getting used to college a little at a time, and it can save you money, too! While there may be many paths to a career, your job opportunities and salary will increase as you attain more education.
2. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Next week we're going to talk about evaluating some of these options.

Postsecondary Options Summaries

I. Community College

What is community college?

- Community colleges typically don't have the strict admissions standards that many four-year colleges do, but you still need to have certain skills to succeed and graduate.
- Almost 50 percent of students who enter community college end up dropping out in the first year. Those who graduate are generally the ones who worked hard in high school.
- Community colleges are run by your city or county.
- Community colleges offer an **associate's degree** after the completion of two years of full-time study.
- Community college has two main purposes:
 - To train students for immediate entry into the job market. Examples include: bookkeeper, fashion designer, computer programmer, and paramedic.
 - To prepare to transfer to a four-year college or university.

What are the benefits?

- You can use a community college as a stepping-stone on the way to a four-year degree.
- May offer evening or weekend classes (allowing students to work while going to school part time).
- Frequently offers specialized job training (apprenticeships and on-the-job training).
- May be more affordable than a four-year college.
- Location, live at home, save money.
- Small class size and personal attention from professors or instructors.
- Professors focus on teaching, their main job is teaching, not research and publishing. Most have practical experience in the subjects they teach.

Things to Consider...

- Make sure your credits will be accepted if you are planning to finish your degree at a four-year school.
- Many students at community colleges do not live on campus, but commute to school instead.
- Research shows students are more likely to graduate from the toughest schools they can get into, graduation rates are better at four-year schools.

Adapted from <http://www.fastweb.com/college-search/articles/819-types-of-schools>, "Types of Schools," by Kay Peterson, PhD.

II. Tech/Trade Schools

What is a technical/trade school?

- Provides courses that allow you to start a career in a specific field that you enjoy without having to take classes that really don't interest you.
- Offers a variety of options, including two-year associate's degree programs and one- to two-year programs from which you earn a license or certificate in a specific skill.
- Offers licenses or certificates in "skilled" careers, such as
 - Auto mechanic
 - Childcare worker
 - Computer technician
 - Hairstylist
 - Medical assistant
 - Truck driver
 - Interior decorator
 - Paralegal

What are the benefits?

- Offers courses that prepare you for a specific career.
- Shorter program length; you begin working soon after graduation.
- Offers an excellent opportunity to gain practical experience in your future trade.
- Small classes and more individual attention.
- Flexible schedule: night and weekend courses for those who work full time.
- Focuses on students' and employers' needs.

Things to Consider....

- The quality of the courses can vary; ask about the school's accreditation and reputation.
- This school makes you an expert in only one thing, so it's hard to switch careers.

Adapted from <http://www.fastweb.com/college-search/articles/819-types-of-schools>, "Types of Schools," by Kay Peterson, Ph D.

III. Apprenticeships

What is an apprenticeship, and how is it different from other educational opportunities?

- There are over 850 occupations that provide apprenticeships for careers in skilled trades or crafts. Some examples are:
 - Aircraft mechanic, automotive service technician and mechanic, carpenter, cook, electrician, emergency medical technician (EMT), firefighter, hairdresser, cosmetologist, nurse (licensed practical & licensed vocational nurse), etc.
- Combination of on-the-job training and related classroom instruction under the supervision of a trained professional, during which the apprentice receives practical and theoretical training for a highly skilled career.
- Depending on the occupation, training can last from one to five years.
- During training, the apprentice receives a salary, which increases over time if the apprentice makes satisfactory progress.
- Upon completing the apprenticeship, the worker receives an Apprenticeship Completion Certificate, which is nationally recognized by the U.S. Department of Labor.

What are the benefits?

- You receive full-time pay while you receive training, and if you do well, your pay will continue to increase.
- You get hands-on experience to learn a skill and see if you really want to do this as a career.
- These highly-skilled occupations typically pay well.
- Certificates may count towards college degrees, other licenses, or certification.
- Certificates are nationally recognized and reflect a high level of training, so you can easily market yourself for a job, anywhere in the country.

Things to Consider....

- Apprenticeships may require a long time commitment, and often require a lot of work.
- You will spend time in classes and will likely spend a lot of time studying.
- Even though you're getting paid, you may have to cover the cost of tools and textbooks.
- You will be trained in one specific occupation, so you will need new and different training if you want to change careers.
- There is a standard application procedure for an apprenticeship, which typically involves an entrance exam, and an interview. Some can be extremely competitive.
- Applicants are placed on a waiting list in order of their qualifications, which includes test results, past education, grades, and interviews.

IV. U.S. Armed Forces

Description and Requirements:

- The overall mission of the armed forces is U.S. security and peace.
- There are five main branches of the U.S. armed forces, and each has a unique mission: Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corp, and Coast Guard.
- Those who are on active duty are full-time soldiers and sailors.
- There are also the Army National Guard, Air National Guard, and Reserves of different branches, these are for people with civilian jobs who can be called to full-time military duty.

Each branch has its set of requirements, but they all include these:

- You must be a U.S. citizen or resident alien.
- You must be at least 17 years old (17-year old applicants require parental consent).
- You must (with very few exceptions) have a high school diploma.
- You must pass a physical medical exam.

What are the benefits?

- To serve your country
- To travel to new places
- To learn life skills, like leadership, teamwork, self-confidence, and discipline
- To learn specific job skills for the workforce, like computer programming or aircraft repair
- Full-time employment
- Educational benefits (tuition assistance, college fund programs, and special loans)*
- Other benefits (health care, life insurance, housing)]

* Educational benefits vary with each branch, so it's important to check with your local military recruiter.

Things to Consider....

- You need to be comfortable with authority, and respect the authority of higher-ranking people. Once in the military, your job is to implement and enforce policy, and there is little or no room to question that policy.
- You may be deployed far away from home and your family.
- You may be called into combat, and may be killed or injured, or have to kill or injure someone.
- When you enlist in the military, you sign a legal contract to at least an eight-year commitment, which means you may sign up for two years of active duty, but are still committed to six years in the reserves. You cannot simply change your mind and get out.

Postsecondary Options Websites

General

FastWeb: Types of Schools

<http://www.fastweb.com/fastweb/resources/articles/index/100036?>

Accreditation of Postsecondary Education in the United States

http://www.graduateguide.com/accreditation_of_postsecondary_education_in_the_united_states.html

Community Colleges

American Association of Community Colleges

(See “About Community Colleges” or “Community College Finder”)

<http://www.aacc.nche.edu>

Five Myths About Community Colleges

<http://www.fastweb.com/fastweb/resources/articles/index/110262?>

Tech/Trade Schools (Career Colleges)

Fast Web: All About Career Schools

<http://www.fastweb.com/fastweb/resources/articles/index/104163?>

Accrediting Council of Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS)

<http://www.acics.org>

Apprenticeships

U.S. Department of Labor: Registered Apprenticeships

http://www.doleta.gov/oa/apprentices_new.cfm

Apprenticeship Training Resources

<http://www.khake.com/page58.html>

North Dakota Apprenticeships

<http://www.workforce.nd.gov/programs/apprenticeship/>

**National Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee:
Apprenticeship Training** (Electrical Industry Careers)

<http://www.njatc.org/training/apprenticeship/index.aspx>

U.S. Armed Forces

United States Army: <http://www.goarmy.com>

United States Air Force: <http://www.airforce.com/>

United States Navy: <http://www.navy.com/>

United States Marine Corps: <http://www.marines.com/>

United States Coast Guard: <http://www.gocoastguard.com/>

Army National Guard: <http://www.1800goguard.com/>

Air National Guard: <http://www.goang.com/>

Other Options After High School

Suppose you want more education after high school, but you do not have the time or resources for a four-year degree.

1. Name two educational options other than a four-year college.

2. Name a pro and con for each option you listed above.

Option #1: _____

Pro: _____

Con: _____

Option #2: _____

Pro: _____

Con: _____

Researching Postsecondary Options

	Community Colleges	Tech/Trade Schools
Description		
Benefits		
Things to Consider		

Researching Postsecondary Options Cont'd

	Apprenticeships	U.S. Armed Forces
Description		
Benefits		
Things to Consider		

Apprenticeship Focus: Becoming an Electrician

Imagine you are considering a career in the electrical industry. Many skilled electrical workers in the country receive their training through the National Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee (NJATC). Apprentices in this program earn money while they're learning valuable skills in the electrical trade. Visit the NJATC website about apprenticeship training at: <http://www.njatc.org/training/apprenticeship/index.aspx> for answers to the questions below.

1. Aside from on-the-job training, how do apprentices learn essential skills and knowledge for electrical careers?

2. What are the four specialty areas for electrical workers?

3. What are the requirements for becoming an apprentice in one of the programs?

4. What are the two sections of the Aptitude Test?

5. Read about the work and training for outside wiremen. What is one essential area of knowledge and one skill that has been identified for outside wiremen?

6. Identify one training center in your state.

U.S. Armed Forces Focus: Joining the Army

Imagine you are considering joining the U.S. Army after high school. Visit the Army website at www.goarmy.com for answers to the questions below.

1. What is the main difference between Active Duty and Army Reserve? (Click “About the Army” in the top menu, then “Active Duty & Army Reserve.”)

2. How long is the length of service for an Active Duty Soldier? How long is a typical deployment?

3. Name two jobs that are available in the U.S. Army in Transportation and Aviation. (See “Careers and Jobs” in the top menu.)

4. What is the ASVAB and how will it be used to determine the type of training I get? (See “Learn How to Join” at the top.)

5. What happens at Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS)? What will they test during the physical exam? (See “Learn How to Join” at the top.)

6. What is the G.I. Bill? What do you need to do to receive benefits?

On the back, write down at least two other questions you would ask your local recruiter.

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