

Choosing a Career

The **BIG** Idea

- How do my values influence my career choice?
- Which career am I most passionate about and why?

AGENDA

- Approx. 45 minutes
- I. Warm Up: Values (5 minutes)
 - II. Comparing Values (10 minutes)
 - III. Career Satisfaction (5 minutes)
 - IV. My Career Choice is... (15 minutes)
 - V. Wrap Up (10 minutes)

MATERIALS

- PORTFOLIO PAGES:**
 - Portfolio page 6, Comparing Careers: Values
 - Portfolio pages 7–8, Career Reflection
 - Portfolio pages 28–30, Grade 10 Skills Checklist (Careers skills only)
- STUDENT HANDBOOK PAGES:**
 - Student Handbook page 90, My Values
- FACILITATOR PAGES:**
 - Facilitator Resource 1, Oprah Winfrey on Career Success
- Laptop
- LCD Projector

OBJECTIVES

During this lesson, the student(s) will:

- Identify values and consider how they affect career choice.
- Choose a career by comparing career research results with their own skills, interests, and values.

OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students consider their own values and identify which of their top careers is most compatible with these values. Next, students view a clip (or read a passage) in which Oprah Winfrey discusses the importance of having a career that is personally fulfilling. (“You know you’re on the road to success if you would do your job and not be paid for it.”) Finally, students review their career research and examine how each of their career choices fits their personality and interests. To wrap up the unit, students choose the career that best fits their needs, and complete a reflection page explaining why it’s a good fit.

PREPARATION

- List the day’s **BIG IDEA** and activities on the board.
- Write the day’s vocabulary word and definition on the board.
- The following handouts need to be made into overhead transparencies or copied onto chart paper:
 - **Student Handbook page 90, My Values**
 - **Facilitator Resource 1, Oprah Winfrey on Career Success**
- If you have a classroom computer with Internet access, link to the Oprah Winfrey interview at the “Academy of Achievement” web site (<http://www.achievement.org>). Look for Oprah Winfrey in the Achievers list and click on the interview associated with her. Display the site using an LCD projector.
- If your classroom does not have Internet access, make copies of **Facilitator Resource 1, Oprah Winfrey on Career Success** (one per student).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In choosing a career, it is important to be aware of values. People who pursue careers that align with their core beliefs and values are more likely to find fulfillment and success in their jobs.

In a 2004 study of college classes of 2001 and 2004, conducted by Northwestern Mutual, three-fourths of the 1,700-plus respondents revealed that how they spend their time on the job is more important than how much money they make. They identified the following values as important in a career: helping others, impacting the world, creativity, and being around others who are idealistic and committed. Another 2004 study by Universum Communications found that more than 40 percent of the college students surveyed said they were looking for jobs that offer increasingly challenging assignments.

(Source: <http://career-advice.monster.com/job-search/career-assessment/examine-values-career-happiness/article.aspx>)

As you guide students to choose a career, you will encourage them to think about and identify their values — what they believe in. To this end, you will help students realize the strong relationship between careers and values in terms of job fulfillment.

VOCABULARY

Values: Beliefs about what is desirable, important, or worthwhile.

IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS

DO NOW:

If you prefer, you may choose to use **Student Handbook page 90, My Values?** as a DO NOW. Give the students three minutes to answer the questions. Once the students have completed this handout, begin with the discussion as written in the **Warm Up**.

In **Activity I, Warm Up: Values**, you may choose to have the students discuss their ideas of values before you share the definition of values. In addition, you may also choose to complete **Student Handbook page 90, My Values?** as a class. Read each value aloud and discuss its description as a class. Then allow students to select their level of importance.

You may wish to illustrate the idea of “work values” with help wanted ads or company mission statements (often found in the “About Us” section of a company website) that provide clues to a company’s values.

For **Activity V, Wrap Up**, if time allows, invite students to share their career choice and reasons with a partner.

In RUPrepareND.com, there is a career exploration tool (Work Values Sorter) for ranking work values and identifying careers that match top values. You may wish to have students explore this feature on their own.

ACTIVITY STEPS

I. WARM UP: Values (5 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Over the past few weeks, we've talked about things to consider when deciding if a career is a good fit for you. [Ask students to recall these categories, and list them on the board.] Today, we'll talk about one last category—values. Then, each of you will take a last look at your top three careers, and choose the one that best fits your personal skills and interests.
2. [Share the definition of values, and have students turn to **Student Handbook page 90, My Values.**]
3. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** A career that's a good fit for you will generally match your values. Take a look at the values listed on this page, and think about how they might connect to career choice.
 - What careers would be good for someone who wants to help others?
 - What careers would be good for someone who craves adventure?
 - What careers would be good for someone who values creativity?
4. [Give the students three minutes to complete **Student Handbook page 90, My Values.**]

II. Comparing Values (10 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Now that you've had a chance to identify your work values, you're going to take a look at **Portfolio page 6, Comparing Careers: Values** to decide if and how each of your top career choices matches your values. You may use your completed **Student Handbook page 90, My Values**, to help you.
2. [Direct students' attention to **Portfolio page 6, Comparing Careers: Values**. Read question 18 aloud, and let students know that this is a question that calls for their own opinions; there is no right or wrong answer. Model how to respond by giving an example: *If 'doctor' is one of your career choices, you might list 'helping others,' 'money,' or "independence," depending on the values you feel are most important to someone with this career.* Then read question 19 aloud. Remind students to look back at **Student Handbook page 90, My Values** to figure out if the two values they assigned the career match any of their top three personal values. Tell students that if a

- career meets none of their top values, then they should write “none” on the chart.]
3. [Instruct students to pay close attention to their written responses on the **Comparing Careers** chart to questions about job description, including interviews as well as working conditions. These areas will help them to see if a career matches their values.]

III. Career Satisfaction (5 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Over the last several weeks, you have researched many aspects of your three careers, from job responsibilities and working conditions to earnings and education. Now that you’ve collected all this information, it’s time to decide which career will best fit your personality.

But first, I’d like you to listen to the words of someone who knows something about career satisfaction. She’s an award-winning TV host, has produced television specials and a Broadway play, and was named one of the 100 Most Influential People of the 20th Century by *Time* magazine. She was also the first African-American woman to become a billionaire—Oprah Winfrey.

2. [Use the LCD projector to display the Oprah Winfrey interview at the “Academy of Achievement” website. (See **Preparation** section for instructions on how to access the interview.) If your classroom does not have Internet access, distribute **Facilitator Resource 1, Oprah Winfrey on Career Success** to each student. Invite volunteers to read aloud Oprah’s words.]
3. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Oprah says, “You know you are on the road to success if you would do your job, and not be paid for it.” What does she mean by that? In what other ways could a job be satisfying?

IV. My Career Choice Is... (15 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Now it’s your turn to identify the career you would find most satisfying.
2. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Look again at your **Portfolio pages 2–6, Comparing Careers**, to see how each category (Job Description, Working Conditions & Earnings, Career Outlook, Education, Values) compares to your personal interests. As you review your findings, think carefully about which of your careers will make you feel as Oprah does—happy to go to work each day. Take the next 15 minutes to review

your Portfolio pages, and then answer questions 1–6 on **Portfolio pages 7–8, Career Reflection.**

V. WRAP UP (10 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Now you've all chosen your top career interest and explained why it's a good fit for you. You'll notice that question 7 asks you to identify a possible obstacle to achieving this career goal and question 8 asks you to brainstorm a short-term goal to tackle this obstacle. Maybe your career requires many years of education to complete, or the competition is tough for a particular job.

[Give students an example of a career obstacle you encountered once, and then share a short-term goal you set to overcome that obstacle.]

2. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Please take the next few minutes to think about what you can do now to make your career goal a reality. And if you're not yet sure what you want to do, don't panic. Finding satisfying work is a lifelong journey — and this is only the first step.

SKILLS CHECKLIST

Direct students' attention to **Portfolio pages 28–30, Grade 10 Skills Checklist.** Have students complete the skills checklist questions for careers.

Careers

I can ...

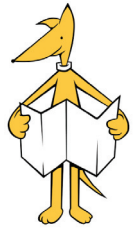
| | | | |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Identify careers that match my skills and interests. | <input type="checkbox"/> not at all | <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat | <input type="checkbox"/> very well |
| Research anticipated job openings in my field of interest. | <input type="checkbox"/> not at all | <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat | <input type="checkbox"/> very well |
| Identify pros and cons of careers that match my skills and interests. | <input type="checkbox"/> not at all | <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat | <input type="checkbox"/> very well |
| Understand how working conditions might affect my choice of career. | <input type="checkbox"/> not at all | <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat | <input type="checkbox"/> very well |
| Understand how using career clusters can help me find my dream job. | <input type="checkbox"/> not at all | <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat | <input type="checkbox"/> very well |
| Identify how my values influence my career choice. | <input type="checkbox"/> not at all | <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat | <input type="checkbox"/> very well |

OPRAH WINFREY ON CAREER SUCCESS

“What I know is, is that if you do work that you love, and work that fulfills you, the rest will come. I truly believe that the reason I’ve been able to be so financially successful is because my focus has never, ever for one minute been money. And the fact that the money has come has really surprised me. I’ve been really surprised and delighted and very pleased, and many times overwhelmed by it. But the money has never been the focus. You know you are on the road to success if you would do your job, and not be paid for it. And I would do this job, and take on a second job to make ends meet if nobody paid me. Just for the opportunity to do it. That’s how you know you are doing the right thing.”

SOURCE: Academy of Achievement: <http://www.achievement.org>

Step 1: Figure out what's important to you.
Step 2: Find careers that match your values.



My Values

Put a check in the column that shows how important each value is to you.
Then circle the three values that are most important to you.

| | Very important | Somewhat important | Not at all important |
|--|----------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| ADVENTURE I like to try new things and visit new places. I'd like a job where the activities change from day to day. | | | |
| BEAUTY I like to be surrounded by beautiful things. Art and nature are important to me. | | | |
| CREATIVITY I like to solve problems or make music or art. | | | |
| FAMILY I want a job that allows me to spend time with my family. | | | |
| FRIENDSHIP I want to share my life with someone. Friends are more important than having a lot of stuff. | | | |
| HELPING OTHERS I want to make the world a better place. | | | |
| INDEPENDENCE I like to set my own schedule and do things my own way. | | | |
| INTEGRITY I stand up for what I believe. Doing the right thing is important to me. | | | |
| KNOWLEDGE I like to learn something new every day. | | | |
| MONEY I need to make a lot of money. | | | |
| POWER I want to be in charge. I like to make decisions, organize activities, and influence other people. | | | |
| RECOGNITION I like being known for my accomplishments. Grades and awards are important to me. | | | |
| SECURITY I like it when I know exactly what's expected, and things don't change much from day to day. | | | |

ADAPTED FROM: *Career Strategies: How to Get and Keep a Job*, Jim Comiskey and Jay McGrath, Workbook & Portfolio pages 12-13. Academic Innovations, 2000.

Comparing Careers: Values

List the careers you're considering in the boxes at the top of the chart. For each career, respond to the questions in the column to the left.

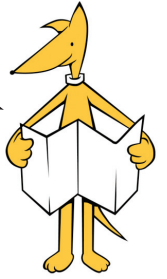
| | | Career 1: | Career 2: | Career 3: |
|----------|-------------|---|-----------|-----------|
| Question | | | | |
| 14 | Work Values | What two values would be most important to someone who has this career? | | |
| 15 | Work Values | Look back at Student Handbook page 90, My Values. Are these two values a good fit for your own personal values? Explain. | | |

Career Reflection

Career Selection _____

Answer the following questions about the career you chose.

Now consider all the research you've done. Which career is the best fit for you?



1. Explain how the day-to-day responsibilities fit your skills and interests.

2. Are there any job responsibilities that are not interesting to you? Explain what they are and why you are still willing to pursue this career.

3. Explain how the working conditions are a good match for your personality.

4. Are there any working conditions that are not a good fit for your personality? If so, explain which ones they are and why you are still willing to pursue this career given those conditions.

5. Explain how the values of this career fit with your own personal values.

Career Reflection (continued)

6. I am willing to complete the education needed for this career.

- high school
- apprenticeship
- tech or trade school
- two-year college
- four-year college
- more than four years of college

7. What is one obstacle that might keep you from achieving the education necessary for this career?

8. Describe one thing you can do right away to help overcome this obstacle.
