

Exploring careers in your community

Students learn about careers that are available in their community by interviewing family members, friends, or other trusted adults to learn about the work they do.

Learning goals

Big idea

Talking to adults about their careers can help you learn about different occupations and career options in your community.

Essential questions

- What kinds of careers do people in your community have?
- What kind of education or training do some common local careers require?

Objectives

- Learn about local careers by interviewing adults in the community
- Reflect on future career options

NOTE

Please remember to consider your students' accommodations and special needs to ensure that all students are able to participate in a meaningful way.

KEY INFORMATION

Building block:

 Financial habits and norms

Grade level: Middle school (6-8)

Age range: 11-14

Topic: Earn (Learning about careers, Making money)

School subject: CTE (Career and technical education), English or language arts, Math, Physical education or health, Science, Social studies or history

Teaching strategy: Cooperative learning, Project-based learning

Bloom's Taxonomy level: Analyze, Evaluate

Activity duration: 45-60 minutes

National Standards for Personal Financial Education, 2021

Earning income: 8-1, 8-2, 8-3

These standards are cumulative, and topics are not repeated in each grade level. This activity may include information students need to understand before exploring this topic in more detail.

What students will do

- Interview one or two adults in the community about their careers and what they had to do to get their current jobs.
- Identify different companies and careers in their community.
- Help create a bar graph that organizes their interviewees' jobs into career categories.

Preparing for this activity

- While it's not necessary, completing the "[Making connections between education and income](#)" activity first may make this one more meaningful.
- Plan for this activity to take multiple days. Each student will need to interview one or two adults and complete their worksheet before doing this activity.
- Print a copy of the career category chart in this guide and copies of all student materials for each student, or prepare for students to access them electronically.
- Distribute the "Exploring careers in your community" worksheet to students well before you plan to do this activity. Explain what's required for the interviews.
 - The worksheet contains the interview questions and space to record the adults' responses.
 - Give students a deadline for completing the interviews and worksheets.
- Have students bring in their completed worksheets the day you plan to do this activity.
- Obtain small sticky notes that students can place on the career category chart to indicate the number of interviewees in a single career category.

What you'll need

THIS TEACHER GUIDE

- Exploring careers in your community (guide)
[cfpb_building_block_activities_exploring-careers-your-community_guide.pdf](#)

STUDENT MATERIALS

- Exploring careers in your community (worksheet)
[cfpb_building_block_activities_exploring-careers-your-community_worksheet.pdf](#)
- Sticky notes

Exploring key financial concepts

Each community has a range of different career options. Some careers, such as teaching, police services, health care, and construction, are familiar to most people and are available in many communities. However, there are many different careers that you may be less familiar with. Some communities have careers in things like agriculture, manufacturing, mining, or oil. Other communities may have career options in things like technology, insurance, or pharmaceuticals.

One way to learn about career options in your area is to talk with family members, friends, neighbors, and other trusted adults to learn about the type of work that they do. Learning about their careers and the steps they had to take to get to where they are can help you become more familiar with career options and start to think about what careers might interest you in the future.

Teaching this activity

Whole-class introduction

- If necessary, review the “Preparing for this activity” section in this guide to confirm the steps students had to complete before doing this activity.
- Let students know how excited you are to hear what information they gathered in their interviews.
- Be sure that students understand key vocabulary:
 - **Career:** A profession that may span your lifetime and includes your education, training, professional memberships, volunteering, and full history of paid work. Can be a synonym for occupation.
 - **Job:** A specific arrangement where you do tasks for an employer.
 - **Occupation:** Describes a type of work with associated tasks, education and training, typical wages, work settings, and more. Can be a synonym for career.
- Explain that you’ll gather information from their interviews and organize it into a bar graph that shows the types of careers in the community.

TIP

Visit CFPB’s financial education glossary at consumerfinance.gov/financial-education-glossary/.

Individual and group work

- Each student will have completed their interviews and worksheet before class.
- Ask students to share the names of the employers (companies, organizations, agencies, etc.) that their interviewees work for.

- On the board, create a list of each employer that the students name.
 - If more than one interviewee worked for a specific employer, keep a count of how many people worked there.
 - Note whether there was one or a few companies where many interviewees worked.
 - Engage students in a discussion about what they can observe about potential careers from the employer list.
- Distribute a few sticky notes to each student.
- Ask them to write each career category that their interviewees identified on an individual sticky note.
- Have students place their sticky notes on the corresponding lines of the bar graph.
- Once all students have added their sticky notes, ask them to review the graph to see what they can observe about career categories in their area.
 - Note which career categories aren't represented and ask students what the absence of some categories in their community might mean.

Wrap-up

- Ask for volunteers to share their responses to the reflection questions.
- If time allows, ask students to brainstorm other ways they might learn about local career opportunities.

Suggested next steps

Consider searching for other [CFPB activities](#) that address the topic of earning, including learning about careers and making money. Suggested activities include ["Meeting your future self,"](#) ["Creating a vision board for careers in the arts,"](#) ["Creating a vision board for careers in healthcare,"](#) and ["Creating a vision board for careers in education."](#)

Measuring student learning

Students' responses on their worksheets and during discussion can give you a sense of their understanding. Keep in mind that students' answers may vary, depending on the people they interviewed. The important thing is for students to have reasonable justification for their answers.

Career category chart

Career category	People who had a job in this career category
Architecture, engineering, and math	
Arts and design	
Building and grounds cleaning, installation, maintenance, and repair	
Business and financial	
Community and social service, education, training, and library	
Computer and information technology	
Construction and mining	
Farming, fishing, and forestry	
Food preparation and serving	
Health care, personal care, life, physical, and social science	
Legal	
Media, communication, entertainment, and sports	
Military and protective service	
Management, office and administrative support	
Sales and production	
Transportation and material moving	