

A Free Library

Guide

to Launching Your New Career



Did you know you have the potential to launch a career, not just find a job? A job is any paid work. But a career means building a profession over the long term. It can allow you to grow and learn, and it can pay better too.

This guide is for everyone seeking a better work life, whether or not you have a college degree or high school diploma. Your own strengths plus specialized training can lead to a career that suits you.



Grab a pen to complete three steps for launching a career:

- 1) Reflect
- 2) Explore
- 3) Plan.

You can do these on your own or with a group.

Sharing your answers with others can help you make discoveries.

Let's get started on your new career!



Step 1: Reflect

Begin by thinking about who you are as a person. What are you good at? What do you like? What jobs have you had in the past? What is your personality? These questions and the three exercises that follow can help you name your particular strengths.




What Are My Gifts?

Source: ABCD Institute

People are gifted in lots of different ways. Some gifts come from our natural abilities. Others are learned through experience.

- **Gifts of the Head.** These could be knowing a lot about a certain subject—maybe you are a sports fan or love history. Or something you are good at using your brain for, like planning a family celebration or speaking another language.
- **Gifts of the Hand.** These could be skills and talents that use your hands or your body, like cooking, art, playing a sport, or taking care of others.
- **Gifts of the Heart.** These are emotional skills, like being a good listener. Or they could be a personal passion or interest, like music or volunteering.

Come up with at least one gift you have in each category. List as many as you can. Then circle your strongest gifts. Are these gifts that you could use in a new career?

 My Gifts of the Head	 My Gifts of the Hand	 My Gifts of the Heart

First Seven Jobs

Adapted from a popular Twitter hashtag

Many people begin their work life in low-paying jobs: babysitting, fast food, newspaper delivery. The idea here is to look back on your early jobs for clues on where to go next. Your first seven jobs can hold a lot of information for your future.

Write down your first seven jobs in the box. These could be any work you did when you were starting out – formal or informal, paid or unpaid.

(Don't worry if this list does not get you to today. You can always make a second list with your next seven jobs.)

Circle the jobs where you learned the most or that you loved the most. What did you learn? What did you love about them?

My First Seven Jobs	
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	



Friends and Family Describe Me As...

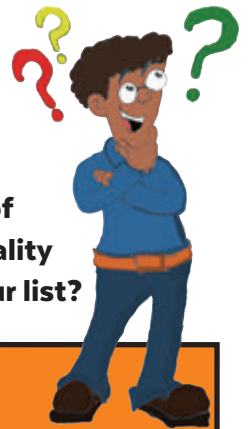
Your personality is what sets you apart from other people. Some personality types are better suited to certain careers. A person who loves helping others might make a good nurse, for example. Knowing your personality can help you figure out which careers are a good fit.

Take a look at the describing words below. Think about the people who know you best. Circle the words that they would use to describe you. Then, add your own words to the list. Which of these would you like to use in a new career?

My Personality			
logical	creative	fixer	Add your own words here:
helper	honest	planner	
practical	curious	logical	
listener	visual	focused	
caring	active	hands-on	
kind	calm	organized	
friendly	patient	detail-oriented	

Adding Up Your Strengths

Let's put it all together. Look back at what you wrote in the last three exercises. What are your gifts? Your favorite jobs? The best words to describe your personality?



List your strengths in the box below. Circle the phrases that describe you and add some of your own. These could be your strongest gifts, skills you learned in past jobs, and personality traits. Think about which of these you could bring to a new career. What stands out in your list?

My Strengths		
Like helping others	Don't mind getting messy	Add your own words here:
Good communicator	Generally safe and careful	
Like to work in teams	Like to work with my hands	
Calm under pressure	Able to keep track of details	
Strong organizing skills	Experienced in customer service	
Prefer variety in my work	Technical problem solver	

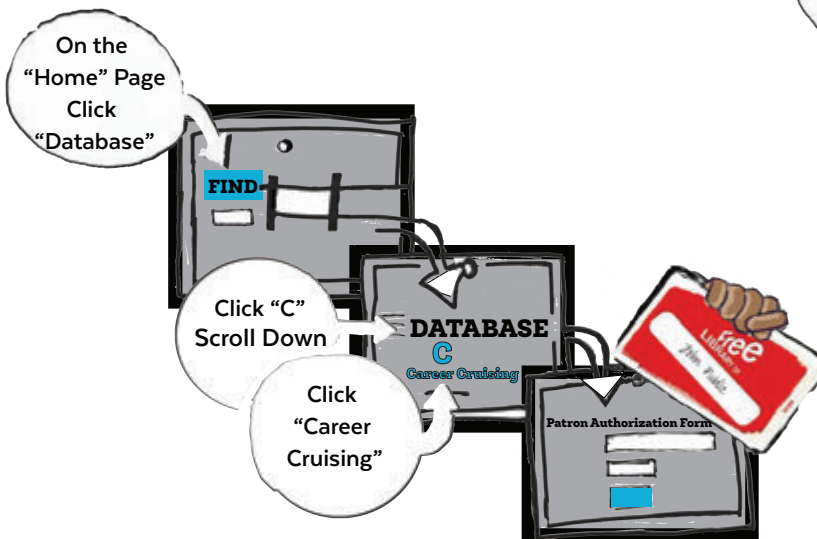
Step 2: Explore

Now that you know your strengths, let's start exploring careers that build on them. The Internet is full of resources. But it can be hard to know which ones are helpful. We recommend Career Cruising.

Career Cruising

Career Cruising is an online tool. It will help you discover new careers that match your strengths. You can use Career Cruising for free with a Free Library of Philadelphia card.

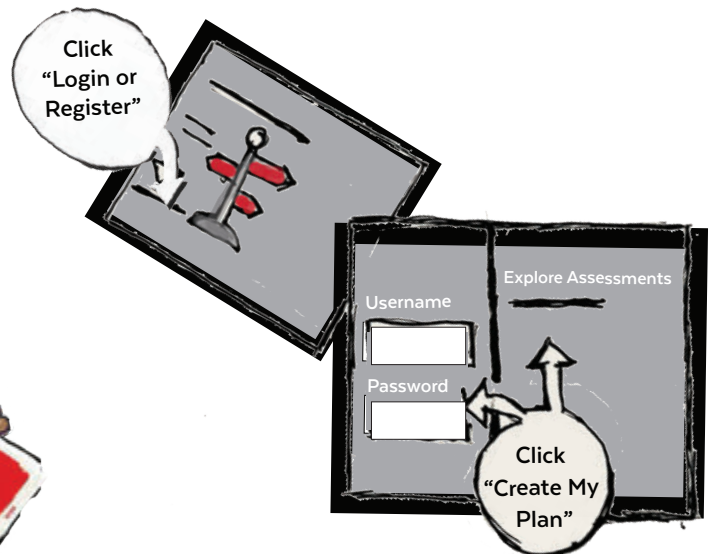
Get started: Go to the Free Library website (freelibrary.org) and click on Databases in the blue box at the top. Then, click on the letter "C" and select Career Cruising from the results.



Get a Library Card

A Free Library card is available at no cost to anyone who lives, works, pays taxes, or goes to school in the City of Philadelphia. In addition, anyone who lives in the state of Pennsylvania can obtain a Free Library card without charge.

Log onto Career Cruising with your library card number and PIN. Under the Assessments tab, click on Matchmaker & My Skills. Create a login. Then, complete the Matchmaker Assessment.



Helpful Hint: You can narrow down the list. Find the "Level of Education" box on the left and click on the level of education that applies to you. **Below, write down three careers from this list that sound interesting to you. What excites you about these careers? What more do you want to learn about them?**

Careers That Match My Strengths

1.

2.

3.

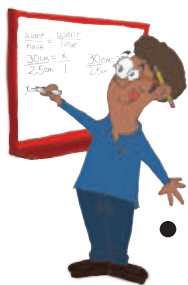
More Resources for Exploring Careers

There are a lot of resources, especially online, for further career exploration. Below are some of our favorites. Visit the job seeker section of the Free Library's website for more resources: freelibrary.org/jobseekers.

- Need skills training to launch a new career? Hundreds of programs in Philadelphia train people in new careers. The Free Library's **Career Training Database** will help you find the right program. Many of these programs offer training at very low or no cost, and do not ask for a high school diploma. The **Career Training Database** is a free resource available online. You do not need a library card to access it.
Go to: careertraining.freelibrary.org



- Need to work on math, reading or English language skills? If you are looking to take classes to earn your high school diploma, GED, or an equivalent, brush up on your math and reading skills, or take English language classes, start through **myPLACE**, which has locations across Philadelphia.
Call 1-833-750-5627 to learn more.



- Need to work on your computer skills? Test your digital literacy and improve your computer skills through **Northstar Digital Literacy**, available at digitalliteracyassessment.org and at many library locations.



Featured Industries with Career Opportunities in Philadelphia

These industries are hiring workers with and without high school diplomas. Specialized training will allow you to launch a career in any of them. Visit the job seekers section of the Free Library website to learn more about these industries: freelibrary.org/jobseekers.



Construction, Utilities & Skilled Trades: This industry has a diverse workforce with a growing number of women. There are more openings in this field than workers to fill them. A great way to get started is to become an apprentice.



Health Care: This industry is huge: One in five jobs in Philadelphia is in health care. Many roles deal directly with patients, but just as many are behind-the-scenes.



Information Technology (IT): This is a fast-growing industry with lots of opportunity. IT careers often do not require a college degree. Some companies just do IT. Many others have IT departments to support their main business.



Manufacturing: The manufacturing sector in Philadelphia is smaller than it used to be, but it has a lot of openings that pay well. Today's manufacturers use cutting-edge technology like 3-D printers and computer-aided modeling.

Step 3: Plan

Action Planning

Nice work thinking through your career options and doing some research. Now you need an action plan! In this final step, consider what actions you can take next. Plan for overcoming obstacles that might get in the way.

In the box below, write down three action steps you can take. For each step, commit to a time frame to complete it. Focus on things you have control over and can do in the short term. What excites you about this career plan? What do you feel unsure about?

Planning for Obstacles

Making a major life change like launching a new career can be hard. But you can set yourself up for success with some careful planning. It helps to think about obstacles ahead of time, and plan how you will overcome them.

Imagine what it will be like to start a new career. Then ask yourself: What might hold me back or stand in my way? In the box below, write down three obstacles you might encounter and how you will respond.



MY CAREER ACTION PLAN	
Action Steps	Time Frame
1.	
2.	
3.	
Possible Obstacles	How I Will Overcome Them
1.	
2.	
3.	

Looking Ahead

Congratulations on completing all three steps of the guide! You reflected on your strengths, explored different careers, and made a plan to pursue them.



As you launch your new career, know that the Free Library of Philadelphia is here to support your goals. Visit the job seeker section of the Free Library website (freelibrary.org/jobseekers), where you can explore career resources and events.