

INDEPENDENT RESEARCH PROJECTS

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Introduction

ABOUT THE INDEPENDENT RESEARCH PROJECTS

The purpose of these short research projects is to help users identify occupation interests and viable career paths. While this will not direct them to job openings at specific organizations, it will help users find a suitable career focus, which will ultimately make users' job searches far more effective.

The activities can be used together, as each one deals with a distinct stage of the career research process. The Completing Career Matchmaker (IRP Activity 1) and Using Career Selector (IRP Activity 2) research projects help users find occupations that match their interests. At this stage, they will also do some basic occupation research to ensure that their potential career choices are realistic, particularly in terms of the level of education required.

The next project, Exploring A Career Option (IRP Activity 3), involves more research into a particular career choice and the informational career interviews. Once users have identified a particular career choice, they can plan any necessary post-secondary education or training using the final two research projects: Planning Education & Training (IRP Activity 4) and Learning About Programs Offered At A Local College (IRP Activity 5).

RESEARCH PROJECT GOALS

IRP Activity 1: Completing Career Matchmaker

Narrow your career search by finding occupations that match your interests.

IRP Activity 2: Using Career Selector

Use factors like earnings, working conditions, education, and other considerations to find suitable occupation choices.

IRP Activity 3: Exploring A Career Option

Research a particular occupation in more depth, view multimedia interviews with real people, and learn about education or training requirements.

IRP Activity 4: Planning Education & Training

If an occupation that interests you requires post-secondary education or training, use the education and training information to find out about programs and schools in your area.

IRP Activity 5: Learning About Programs Offered At A Local College

Upgrade your qualifications! Find out what kinds of education or training you can get at a local college.

IRP Activity 1: Completing Career Matchmaker

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The purpose of this project is to help you focus your career search by finding occupations that match your interests, not to find actual job openings at specific companies.

1. Go to www.careercruising.com and enter your username and password. Click on **Log In**.
2. On the Main page, click on the **Assessments** link in the top menu bar. You must be logged into My Plan to take the assessment. If you are not already logged in, select **Login** under Career Matchmaker, enter your My Plan username and password, then click on **Login**. If you have not already created a My Plan, click on **Register** to create one. If you cannot create a My Plan account, speak to your counselor or career advisor.
3. Choose **Start Matchmaker**. Read the instructions on the Introduction page, then enter a name for your session under the Matchmaker Label heading. Click **Start Now** to begin answering questions.
4. Answer the first 39 questions. Consider each question carefully. The more thought you put into your answers, the better your results will be. If a question seems unclear to you, read the **More Info** section next to the question. Career Matchmaker will suggest careers that match your answers.
5. We **strongly** suggest that you go through the second round of questions as well, since this will provide you with more accurate career suggestions. After you finish the first 39 questions, click on the **Answer More Questions** button in the **Improve My Results** section on the left side of the page. Answer as many questions as possible, then click the **View My Career Suggestions** button. Career Matchmaker will update your list of career suggestions.
6. If you were not prompted to select a level of education at the beginning of Career Matchmaker but would like to limit your suggestions to occupations requiring a certain level of education, select one of the options in the **Level Of Education** section on the left side of the page. For example, if you have a high school education and are interested in 2-year college or technical training rather than 4-year college, select High School and 2-Year College or Technical Training in the Level Of Education section, then click **Update My Results** to see your updated list of career suggestions.
7. Now you can browse through your list of career suggestions (the careers are ranked according to how well they suit your identified interests). To learn more about a career, simply click on it. In each career profile, you will see:
 - How the career suits your interests (*In the Suitable for You? section, you can see how your answers match up with the most important aspects of that career.*)
 - A summary of key information about the occupation
 - A description of the tasks people do on the job

IRP Activity 1: Completing Career Matchmaker

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- Working conditions
- Earnings
- Education and training requirements
- A sample career path
- Links to related careers in the program
- Links to career-related websites and other useful resources
- Multimedia interviews with two people in the occupation

8. After browsing through the careers on your suggestion list, select two that you are seriously interested in pursuing. Be realistic; choose careers in which you have a genuine interest and for which you have a thorough understanding of the educational path required. For each career option, write down three reasons you like it (*e.g., enjoy key job tasks or central aspects, high potential earnings, comfortable working conditions*).

Career 1: _____

Why I Like This Career Choice:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Career 2: _____

Why I Like This Career Choice:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

9. If you would like to research one of these careers in more depth, you can proceed to **IRP Activity 3: Exploring A Career Option**.

IRP Activity 2: Using Career Selector

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The purpose of this project is to help you focus your career search by finding occupations that match your interests and work goals.

1. Go to www.careercruising.com and enter your username and password. Click on **Log In**.
2. On the Main page, click on **Careers** in the top menu bar and then click the **Start Career Selector** button on the right side of the page.
3. Select your favorite **School Subjects** (preferably two to three choices).
4. Click on the **Career Clusters** link. Select two to three areas in which you would be interested in working.
5. Click on the **Type Of Education** link. Select the type(s) of education you have attained or plan to pursue.
6. Click on the **Core Tasks** link. Be sure to read all 20 core tasks. Choose three to five tasks you would like to do regularly at work.
7. Click on the **Earnings** link. Select the minimum level of income you would like to make. (Remember that selecting high levels of income may eliminate some careers that you might otherwise find interesting.)
8. Click on the **Working Conditions** link. Select the working conditions you could **not** tolerate.
9. Now click on **View Results** to see careers that match your selected criteria.
10. Browse through your list of career matches. (If there were no complete matches, click on the **Close Matches** tab to view careers that meet most, but not all, of your search criteria.) To learn more about a career, simply click on it. In each career profile, you will see:
 - A summary of key information about the occupation
 - A description of the tasks people do on the job
 - Working conditions
 - Earnings
 - Education and training requirements
 - A sample career path

IRP Activity 2: Using Career Selector

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- Links to related careers in the program
- Useful resources such as websites
- Multimedia interviews with two people in the occupation

11. Select two careers from your results list that you are seriously interested in pursuing. Be realistic; choose careers in which you have a genuine interest and for which you have a thorough understanding of the educational path required. For each career option, write down three reasons you like it (*e.g., enjoy key job tasks or central aspects, high potential earnings, comfortable working conditions*).

Career 1: _____

Why I Like This Career Choice:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Career 2: _____

Why I Like This Career Choice:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

12. If you would like to research one of these careers in more depth, you can proceed to **IRP Activity 3: Exploring A Career Option**.

IRP Activity 3: Exploring A Career Option

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This research project is designed to help you explore an occupation that interests you in more depth. If you have just completed IRP Activity 1: Completing Career Matchmaker or IRP Activity 2: Using Career Selector and you have your list of suggested careers on the computer screen, you can click on the career you want to explore and skip ahead to step #4.

1. Go to www.careercruising.com and enter your username and password. Click on **Log In**.
2. On the Main page, click on the **Careers** link in the top menu bar. In the box beside **Keyword Search**, enter the name of a career that you would like to pursue or have seriously considered (*e.g., nurse, welder, web designer, or helicopter pilot*). Click on **Search**.

If you are having trouble finding a career, use the **Index** to search alphabetically.

3. Once you have found a career that interests you, click on it.

Career: _____

4. Read the **Job Description** section. Write down three of the main tasks that people in this career perform.

5. Read the **Working Conditions**, **Earnings**, and **Sample Career Path** sections. How does what you learned compare with your expectations? (*e.g., are the working conditions or earnings different from what you expected?*)

6. Click the **Education** link and read through that section. In your own words, explain the education and/or training you need to pursue this career.

IRP Activity 3: Exploring A Career Option

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Click on one of the two interviews.

Person's name: _____

7. Click on the links to learn more about the person's occupation. The **Likes**, **Dislikes**, and **Advice** answers come in sound or video clips, and you can see a sample of a typical work day by clicking on **A Day In The Life**. Write down three important things that you learned about the career from this interview. (*e.g., advice to people who want to go into this career or what personal characteristics are important for success in this occupation*)

Now go to the other interview.

Person's name: _____

8. Go through this interview and write down two things that you learned about the career from it.

Final Thoughts

9. Now that you have learned more about this career, are you still interested in pursuing it yourself? Why or why not?

You can print the career profile by clicking on the **Printer Friendly** icon.

You can save careers to your Plan by clicking on the **Save To My Plan** button. If you have already created a Plan, enter your personal username and password in the appropriate spaces and click **Login**. If not, create a Plan to store your work by clicking on **Create My Plan** and following the instructions.

You can also do more research on this career using the Internet. Click on the **Other Resources** link in the career profile for links to organizations and websites that offer additional information.

IRP Activity 4: Planning Education & Training

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This research project is designed to help you find appropriate education and training programs. If you are already using Career Cruising and have found a specific career that you would like to pursue, you can skip ahead to step #4.

1. Go to www.careercruising.com and enter your username and password. Click on **Log In**.
2. On the Main page, click the **Careers** link in the top menu bar. In the box beside **Keyword Search**, enter the name of the career that you are interested in pursuing (e.g., *nurse, welder, website designer, helicopter pilot*). Click on **Search**.

If you are having trouble finding a career, use the **Index** to search alphabetically.

3. Once you have found a career that interests you, click on it.

Career: _____

4. Click on the **Education** link on the left side of the page. Read the Education & Training section carefully.

5. Scroll down to the Related College Programs section. Select one of these program links to learn which schools offer education or training in that area (*the one or two programs at the top are usually the most suitable preparation for the career*). If you have selected a career that doesn't have any related programs, you may wish to go back and select a different career.

Write down the name of the program you chose.

Program: _____

6. Click on the program name. You will see a list of colleges that offer this program/major in your state. You can also select a different state or region by clicking on the **Add/Edit States** button on the left side of the page.
7. Read through the list of schools and find one that you might be interested in attending. Click on the school's name.
8. Use the links on the left to find the following information about the school. If any of the information is not available for this school, write N/A.

School name: _____

Location: _____

IRP Activity 4: Planning Education & Training

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Website: _____

Admissions contact information: _____

General requirements for admission to the school: _____

Estimated total expenses: _____

9. Click on the **Majors Offered** link. Read through the list of majors/programs offered and select the one that you are interested in taking. Write down the name of the major/program and the type of program (*bachelor's degree, associate degree, or non-degree*).

Major/Program: _____

Type of program: _____

Click on the **School Profile** link to return to the profile. You can save the school profile to your Plan by clicking the **Save To My Plan** button. If you have already created a Plan, enter your personal username and password in the appropriate spaces and click **Login**. If not, create a Plan by clicking on **Create My Plan** and following the instructions.

Additional Research

10. Find the school's website address on the School Profile page. Click on the link.

11. On the school's website, try to find information about the major/program you recorded in step #9. The name of the program may differ slightly from what you wrote down. (*Hint: Look for "admissions," "academic programs," "courses offered," or "course catalog."* You can also use the school's search function or browse through different departments.)

Write down any useful information you find (*e.g., program admission requirements, application deadlines, degrees offered*).

IRP Activity 4: Planning Education & Training

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12. What other information would you need before deciding to take this program? How will you find this information?

IRP Activity 5: Learning About Programs Offered At A Local College

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Upgrade your qualifications! You can use this activity to find out about education and training offered at local colleges.

1. Go to www.careercruising.com and enter your username and password. Click on **Log In**.
2. On the Main page, click the **Education** link in the top menu bar.
3. In the **School Selector** section on the right side of the page, choose whether you want to look for undergraduate degree programs or career and technical non-degree programs.
4. Select your preferences on the **Type of School** page.
5. Click on the **Location & Setting** link, and select the state you live in or the state(s)/region(s) where you would like to pursue studies.
6. Click on the **Majors Offered** link. Click the **Add Majors** button and search for programs by keyword. A list of specific majors will appear. Put a check mark beside one or more majors/programs that you are interested in taking.
8. Write down the names of the majors/programs you selected:

9. Click the **Add to Selector** button.
10. Click on **View Results** to see a list of schools that match your results. (If you do not see any schools, click on **Close Matches** to see schools that match most, but not all, of your criteria.)
11. Scroll through your list of schools. Find one that you are interested in attending, perhaps one located near you.

School Name: _____

12. Click on the school's name. Click on the **Majors Offered** link. Read through the list of majors/programs offered and select one or two that you are interested in taking.

13. Write down the names of the majors/programs and the type of program (*bachelor's degree, associate degree, non-degree*).

Program 1

Major/Program name: _____

IRP Activity 5: Learning About Programs Offered At A Local College

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Type of program: _____

Program 2

Major/Program name: _____

Type of program: _____

14. Use the links on the left to find the following information about the school. If any of the information is not available for this school, write N/A.

Location: _____

Website: _____

Admissions contact information: _____

General requirements for admission to the school: _____

Estimated total expenses: _____

You can save the school profile to your Plan by clicking the **Save To My Plan** button. If you have already created a Plan, enter your personal username and password in the appropriate spaces and click **Login**. If not, create a Plan by clicking on **Create My Plan** and following the instructions.

Additional Research

15. Click on the school's website address.

16. On the school's website, try to find information about the **first** major/program you recorded in step #13. The name of the program may differ slightly from what you wrote down. (*Hint: Look for "admissions," "academic programs," "courses offered," or "course catalog." You can also use the school's search function or browse through different departments.*)

Write down any useful information you find (e.g., *program admission requirements, application deadlines, degrees offered*).

IRP Activity 5: Learning About Programs Offered At A Local College

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17. Try to find information about the **second** major/program you selected above on the school's website.

Write down any useful information you find (*e.g., program admission requirements, application deadlines, degrees offered*).

18. What other information would you need before deciding to take this program? How will you find this information?
