

Entry-Level Jobs

The **BIG** Idea

- How can a part-time or summer job help prepare me for future work?

AGENDA

Approx. 45 minutes

- I. Warm Up (10 minutes)
- II. What Can a Job Do For You? (10 minutes)
- III. First Job: Two Perspectives (15 minutes)
- IV. Wrap Up (10 minutes)

MATERIALS

☐ STUDENT HANDBOOK PAGES:

- Student Handbook page 91, FIRST JOBS: Employer's Perspective
- Student Handbook page 92, Truck Driver Reading
- Student Handbook page 93, FIRST JOBS: Employee's Perspective
- Student Handbook page 94, TV Production Assistant Reading
- Student Handbook page 95, First Jobs on My Career Ladder

☐ FACILITATOR PAGES:

- Facilitator Resource 1, DO NOW, Finding a Job 1: Entry-Level Jobs

OBJECTIVES

During this lesson, the student(s) will:

- Identify ways entry-level jobs can help prepare a person for future work.

OVERVIEW

Students discover that after-school or summer jobs offer opportunities to build skills, prove themselves, and even get an “inside look” at careers they might be considering. They discuss some of the skills you can build in entry-level jobs, and how they can prove themselves to employers through solid work and a positive work ethic. They also read on employer’s and employee’s perspectives about the importance of first jobs. To conclude, they identify ways that four different entry-level jobs could help them up their own career ladders.

PREPARATION

- List the day’s **BIG IDEA** and activities on the board.
- Write the day’s vocabulary words and definitions on the board.
- The following handouts need to be made into overhead transparencies or copied onto chart paper:
 - **Student Handbook page 95, First Jobs on My Career Ladder**
- Write the following on an overhead or chart paper (used in **Activity II, What Can a Job Do For You?**)
 - Find out more about what you like to do
 - Get specific skills you’ll need later on in your career
 - Learn general skills you can use anywhere in the workplace
 - Get a good reference for your next job
- Write the following questions on an overhead or chart paper (used in **Activity III, First Job: Two Perspectives.**)
 - What surprised you about these two stories?
 - What is the boss at the truck-driving school looking for in an employee?
 - Do you think he would have liked the TV production assistant? Why or why not?
 - Is the production assistant someone you’d want to work with?
 - Is the production assistant someone you’d hire? Why or why not?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Almost six million U.S. teenagers between the ages of 16 and 19 were employed at some time in 2005 (U.S. Department of Labor, BLS). Although they make up less than 5 percent of the overall workforce, they're an important part of the American economy.

Chances are, some of these teens are in your classroom. Whether they're working at the mall, ringing up burgers at a fast-food restaurant, or bagging groceries, students can learn skills and obtain experience that will help them succeed in the future.

VOCABULARY

Recommendation: a description of a job candidate's qualifications from someone who knows them.

Work ethic: positive work attitude, dedication to getting the job done.

IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS

DO NOW:

(You may choose to present the **Warm Up** activity as a written Do Now. Present the questions on the board or overhead, and have students write only their answers on index cards. You could also choose to give the students a handout by copying **Facilitator Resource 1, DO NOW.**)

Questions:

1. Are you interested in getting a part-time or summer job within the next year? Explain why you are interested and what type of job you would like to have.
2. Explain how you think a part-time or summer job could prepare you for a future job/career.

[Then call on students to read their answers and continue with Warm Up as written.]

If you run short of time, drop the second reading ("TV Production Assistant") from **Activity III, "First Job: Two Perspectives."** You may also wish to skip this reading if you feel the subject of "scooping poop" might distract students from the main point of the lesson or if you feel you've

adequately discussed the unpleasant aspects of an entry-level job.

In the next lesson, students will be looking up local businesses that employ teenagers. You may choose to have students find one local business that employs teens and bring in contact information that will be compiled in a booklet.

For **Activity III, First Jobs: Two Perspectives**, if you think your students will struggle to read the passages individually, you may choose to read the stories aloud as a class.

ACTIVITY STEPS

I. WARM UP (10 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** During the next six lessons, we're going to talk about finding jobs — what kinds of jobs are available to you, what they can offer you, what skills and attitudes employers are looking for, and how you can convince employers that you have the skills they need. Today, we'll talk about entry-level jobs, which are the types of jobs you're most likely to have as a teenager.
2. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Raise your hand if you've ever held a job. Why did you choose to get a job? What did you get from your job? [Give individual students time to answer. Most will probably mention the money they earn.]

Your first work experience can offer a lot more than a paycheck – it can be a stepping stone as you move on to different, better jobs.

3. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** In this lesson, we'll be discussing why entry-level jobs and early work experiences are so important to your future – even if they don't seem like they have anything to do with the career you see yourself choosing. Think about a career as a ladder, and the first job is like the first rung – you can't climb the ladder without taking that first step!

The question we want to answer today is, "How can a part-time or summer job help prepare me for future work?"

4. [Next, talk about your own early work experience. Share your frustrations or challenges, as well as what you liked about it. Include some of the menial, boring, or embarrassing tasks you had to do, in order to help students see that even you had to start somewhere. Explain what you ended up learning from the experience, or share one lesson you still carry with you today.]

II. What Can A Job Do For You? (10 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Let's list four ways entry-level jobs can help prepare us for the next rungs up the career ladder [Display four bullet points below on chart paper or overhead projector.] (See Preparation.):
 - Find out more about what you like to do
 - Get specific skills you'll need later on in your career

- Learn general skills you can use anywhere in the workplace
- Get a good reference for your next job

2. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** You might be thinking that there’s no way an after-school job could do all these things. But let’s look at an example. Say you want to be a doctor. Where could you work to learn if this is a good career for you? (*hospital, doctor’s office*) What skills could you learn there? (*how medical records are handled, how to talk to a sick patient and family members*).

Another great benefit of this type of job is that it would give you an “inside look” at a career in medicine. You could experience the environment in a hospital, and see if the setting, the people, and the pace are a good fit for you. It would also be a great way to make contacts and maybe even meet mentors in the field.

Let’s think of other examples of entry-level jobs that could help you choose your career path. What are some possible entry-level jobs if you wanted to be a chef? (*working at a restaurant, in the kitchen or as a waiter*) What if you wanted to be a children’s counselor? (*babysitting, working in a children’s store, tutoring*) A hair stylist? (*work as an assistant or receptionist at a hair salon*).

3. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Sometimes you might not find a job that’s in the field you’d like to pursue. Job opportunities like these may be limited for 16-year-olds. What if you couldn’t find work in a doctor’s office, and had to work at the GAP or McDonald’s? What general skills would you learn? (*how to use a computer; how to get along with different types of people, like your boss or difficult customers; how to apply math skills, like figuring out sales prices and paychecks*).
4. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** At the same time that you’re learning new skills, you’re also meeting people who can help you reach your career goals, including your boss. Even if your boss isn’t your favorite person, he or she will be the one to decide whether you get a raise or a promotion. And when you apply for your next job, employers will ask him or her for a recommendation to see if you’re someone they’d want to hire. You might also ask an employer for a college recommendation — a letter describing your skills and readiness for college.

How would you behave to get a good reference from your employer? (Allow students to respond. Examples include: you would work hard, follow instructions, get to work on time, have a positive attitude, and try to get along with others. You might also show

that you can solve problems and handle emergency situations.)

5. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Any entry-level job – whether you’re bagging groceries or babysitting – will offer ways to build skills and prove yourself.

III. First Job: Two Perspectives (15 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Now we’re going to read two stories about entry-level jobs: one from an employer – a boss at a truck-driving school, and another from an employee – a TV production assistant. You might be surprised by what you learn. But before you read the stories, I’d like you to read a few statements about first jobs and tell me if you agree or disagree with each.

[Ask students to turn to **Student Handbook page 91, FIRST JOBS: Employer’s Perspective**. Have them read the “pre-reading” statements and check whether they agree or disagree. Give students a few minutes to jot down their answers.]

2. [Next, refer students to **Student Handbook page 92, Truck Driver Reading**. Ask them to read the story and then answer the “post-reading questions” in **First Jobs: Reading Questions**.]
3. Once the students have completed these questions they should turn to **Student Handbook page 93, FIRST JOBS: Employee’s Perspective**. Again, they should answer the “pre-reading” statements and read the corresponding story on **Student Handbook page 94, TV Production Assistant Reading**. After completing the reading they should answer the post-reading questions on **Student Handbook page 93, FIRST JOBS: Employee’s Perspective**.]
4. [Discuss both sets of post-reading Questions as a class. Then, display the questions below on an overhead or chart paper. Allow students to respond to each of the questions. You may choose to record their responses.]

5. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:**

What surprised you about these two stories?

What is the boss at the truck-driving school looking for in an employee?

Do you think he would have liked the TV production assistant? Why or why not?

Is the TV production assistant someone you’d want to work with?

Is the TV production assistant someone you’d hire? Why or why not?

6. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Both of these stories touch on something very important – an employee’s work ethic and overall attitude. What is a work ethic? (*dedication to hard work*) What does the second story tell you about this person’s work ethic and attitude about the job?

It’s not always easy to work hard and have a positive attitude in an entry-level job, especially if you’re doing menial or boring tasks. You might get frustrated or irritated at a boss or coworker. Letting this affect your work can be a big mistake. Teens who show up late for work, roll their eyes at customers or bosses, or gossip with or about coworkers probably won’t be in line for a promotion or a good reference.

What does a good attitude look like? [Allow students to respond—*direct eye contact, pleasant tone of voice, problem-solving rather than problem-creating, completing your tasks, and showing up on time.*] How is it to your advantage to behave this way?

IV. WRAP UP (10 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Before we end for the day, I’d like you to think about how different entry-level jobs can help you up your own career ladder. In this activity, I’d like you to write down your current choice for a career. Then share two things you could learn from four different entry-level jobs.

[Refer students to **Student Handbook page 95, First Jobs on My Career Ladder**. Give students five minutes to complete the activity.]

2. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Whether you have a job now, or are considering one in the future, remember how important these early experiences can be – and how much you can really gain from them. Focusing on the long-term benefits can make a boring job more meaningful, and maybe even more enjoyable.

Next week, we’ll talk about jobs you can get right now, and find out what local employers are really looking for.

DO NOW

Finding a Job 1: Entry-Level Jobs

Directions: You will have three minutes to read the questions below and write your answers.

Questions:

1. Are you interested in getting a part-time or summer job within the next year? Why or Why not? Explain why you are interested and what type of job you would like to have.

2. Explain how you think a part-time or summer job could prepare you for a future job/career.

FIRST JOBS: Employer's Perspective

BEFORE READING

Directions: Check a box to the right of each statement to show whether you agree or disagree.

Truck Driver

| First-Job Statement | Agree | Disagree |
|--|--------------|-----------------|
| You can get a job as a truck driver (driving the big rigs) right out of high school, as long as you have a driver's license. | | |
| If you're applying for a job, it's very important that your previous work experience is in the same field. | | |
| An employer would rather hire someone who's had the same job for a long time rather than several short-term jobs. | | |

AFTER READING

Directions: Answer the questions below.

Truck Driver: An Employer's Perspective

1. If you want to be a truck driver, what kind of work could you do right out of high school?

2. Will an employer hire someone who does not having formal experience driving a truck? Why or why not? [This is an inference question.]

3. Why do employers look for someone who's been in the same job for at least a year?

Truck Driver Reading

An Employer's Perspective

I work at a truck-driving school. We teach people to drive the big rigs, the trucks used to ship cargo cross-country. There are lots of young people who want to do this kind of work right out of high school. They know there's good money to be made if you're willing to work hard – and they're ready to hit the road after sitting in a classroom for 12 or 13 years.

The problem is that you can't get a cross-country license until you're 21. (It's called a CDL, or commercial driver's license.) This is discouraging to people who've just graduated, who are often only 17 or 18. A lot of people work locally till they're 21 – driving smaller trucks in their home state. That's great experience – good work if you can get it.

Something that impresses future employers is seeing a young person who has shown they can stick with something for a while. It almost doesn't matter what the job is. If they work at something, anything really, for a whole year, it shows they're ready to take work seriously. Show up on time, do what they were hired to do – now that's somebody I'd want to hire.

FIRST JOBS: Employee's Perspective

BEFORE READING

Directions: Check a box to the right of each statement to show whether you agree or disagree.

TV Production Assistant

| First-Job Statement | Agree | Disagree |
|---|--------------|-----------------|
| Even after you go to college, you may still have to do menial work, especially in your first job after college. | | |
| The daily life of a TV production assistant is glamorous. | | |

AFTER READING

Directions: Answer the questions below.

TV Production Assistant: An Employee's Perspective

1. What are some of the day-to-day tasks of a TV production assistant?

2. Why did this person decide to pick up the poop?

3. How could this have helped her team in the short-term? How might it have helped her in the long term?

TV Production Assistant Reading

An Employee's Perspective

I work as a production assistant on a television show, which is pretty much the first TV job people get when they graduate from college. On the one hand, it's pretty cool to be hanging out, watching a TV show get made, and being part of it all. On the other hand, the hours are long and some of the work is just ridiculous – moving heavy stuff, bringing very picky people coffee exactly the way they like it, sitting in trucks watching equipment. Not at all what I went to college for!

On the show I work on, we work on location, in real people's houses. We pay them a location fee to videotape our stories there. One of the important parts of the production team's job is making sure the homeowners are happy – and that all the people and equipment going in and out of the house don't damage anything.

People think TV is glamorous, but that's not always the case. For example, here's what happened on location a few days ago:

People were moving lights, props, and equipment into the house, and I saw this big pile of “droppings” on the front lawn – definitely left by the homeowners' dog. I just knew someone on the crew was going to step in that pile and track it into the house. The homeowners would be mad and we'd have to stop everything and clean it up – wasting valuable production time. I can't tell you how much I wanted to ignore the problem and walk away, but I did it – I scooped the poop. I don't know if anybody saw me, but I figure that one day when I'm the producer or director – and I will be! – I'll want to know that somebody else is thinking about this kind of stuff so I don't have to.

P.S. I can't wait to move up to the next career level!

FIRST JOBS ON MY CAREER LADDER

My career goal: _____

List two things you could learn in each part-time job below that would help you in your future career. These could include:

- Specific skills you'll need later on in your career
- General skills you can use anywhere in the workplace

An example has been done for you.

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>EXAMPLE: My career goal: ER nurse</p> <p>Job: Cashier at a drug store chain</p> <p>1. Learn more about prescriptions and over-the-counter medications.</p> <p>2. Solve customer problems, learn how to work with the public.</p> | <p>Job: Babysitter</p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> |
| <p>Job: Volunteer in the school office</p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> | <p>Job: Cashier at McDonald's</p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> |