



CAREER READINESS GUIDE FOR

High School Juniors & Seniors

IS YOUR TEEN READY FOR THE WORKFORCE?

What if someone knew what they wanted to do before they even got to college? Imagine how that would impact those years.

Unsure what career fits your strengths?

Want to avoid wasting precious time and tuition money?

What if you choose the wrong major?

Curious what employers actually look for?

Start Strong. Claim Your Future.



WHAT IS Career Readiness?

Career readiness describes how well graduates of any school are prepared for success in the workplace and for lifelong careers.

Most high school students spend hundreds of hours preparing for college and almost no time preparing for a career. That's why so many young people change majors, and waste time and tuition dollars still not knowing what they want to do even after college graduation.

This 4-step guide and checklist helps students start strategizing as early as high school so they start their careers off right!

This guide incorporates data from the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) [Career Readiness Competencies](#) developed directly from employer feedback regarding weaknesses in new graduates. Adapted here for high schoolers who want a head start.

STEP 1 SELF-AWARENESS

Most students are asked to pick a major or a direction before anyone asks them who they actually are. That's backwards. The clearest career decisions come **AFTER** self discovery.

1. Identify Your Natural Strengths & Areas for Development

List what comes easily and does not come easily to you. Be honest about both.

2. Third Party Perspective

Ask three people who know you well - parent, teacher, or friend - about what they see as your greatest strengths.

3. Unearth Your Core Values

Since values shape every career decision, it is important to be fully cognizant of them using specific tools to help you.

4. Take Strengths & Personality Assessments

Take a structured hard assessment to give yourself something concrete to reflect and build on.

5. Recognize Your Motivators

Understand what energizes you, what drains you, and the environments where you're most likely to thrive.



CAREER COACH INSIGHT

Self-Awareness is foundational. Students who take the time to understand themselves make better academic and career decisions because they are choosing from a place of confidence rather than pressure.



ACTION ITEMS | WRITE YOUR SELF-DISCOVERY SUMMARY

Your strengths, values, and interests assembled into one paragraph will be a great referral point for you to turn to in the years to come. A personal self-discovery summary that captures what you have learned about yourself after completing these steps will become the foundation for the rest of your career quest journey.



THE GAP NO ONE IS ADDRESSING

CAREER COACHING VS. ACADEMIC COUNSELING

Career coaching can help you with:



Clear direction



Targeted classes



Optimized networking



Polished narrative



Informational interviewing



Skill building internships

STEP 2 GROW SKILLS EMPLOYERS VALUE

Grades tell colleges what you've learned. Your skills and characteristics tell employers how you'll perform. The most successful professionals never stop learning and many employers value this trait just as much as technical knowledge. Fortunately, skills can be perfected.

6. Develop a Growth Mindset

Understand that all professions require growth and flexibility. Explore how your beliefs about learning influence your willingness to take on new challenges.

7. Seek Development Opportunities

Assume duties or positions that will help you progress professionally. Take on a leadership role, a new class, or a project outside your comfort zone. Voluntarily participate in further education, training, or other events to support maximize growth.

8. Seek Constructive Feedback

Learn how to ask for meaningful feedback and use it to improve your skills and confidence. Ask a teacher, supervisor, coach, or mentor for honest input and then apply it.

9. Practice Lifelong Learning

All professions are changing at lightning speed. Identify ways to continue learning outside the classroom and beyond through books, videos, certification, hobbies, and personal projects.



CAREER COACH INSIGHT

Employers rarely expect their hires to know everything. They do expect them to demonstrate curiosity, initiative, and a willingness to learn. Start cultivating these traits in high school.



ACTION ITEMS | DEVELOP YOUR PROGRESS PLAN

Choose one new experience or learning program you'll commit to before the end of this semester.

Guidance counselors are trained to get you into college, not for getting the job afterward.



**START NOW BEFORE IT COSTS YOU THAT GREAT JOB OFFER
THAT CAN SET YOUR COURSE FOR LIFE.**

STEP 3 COMMUNICATION & NETWORKING

Since many career opportunities begin with a conversation, learning how to communicate professionally, ask thoughtful questions, and build genuine relationships gives you a distinct advantage.

10. Practice Advocating for Yourself

Speaking up for your own needs in class or out is a skill you'll use for the rest of your life in both personal and professional situations.

11. Start Building Your Personal Network

Establish, maintain, and/or leverage relationships with people who can help you professionally. Identify adults, teachers, mentors, coaches, family members, and professionals who can support your career journey.

12. Conduct Informational Interviews

Speak with someone working in a career that interests you and learn from their experiences. A 10-minute conversation teaches you more than hours of searching online.

CAREER COACH INSIGHT

Networking is about learning from people who have already traveled the path you're considering and building relationships before you need them. The strongest professional networks begin long before graduation. Employers hire people who can speak up, build relationships, and show they have worked toward a plan.

ACTION ITEMS | DEVISE YOUR NETWORKING PLAN

Perfect your narrative and pitch. Keep a list of your networking names along with your relationship and relevant notes. Schedule one career conversation within the next two weeks.

STEP 4 GOAL SETTING

Without a plan, it's easy to drift through high school and college haphazardly making it to the finish line. Successful students make intentional decisions and take definitive actions since they know where they're headed.

13. Explore Possible Career Paths

Research several career paths that align with your strengths, interests, and values based on your earlier work and research.

14. Build Your Long-Term Career Action Plan

Identify experiences, classes, extracurricular activities, and internships that move you toward your goals or possible path.

15. Create Your One-Year Vision

Identify what you hope to accomplish over the next 12 months. Write down one goal for a high school internship and one for post graduation as a pre-college internship or work-based learning.



CAREER COACH INSIGHT

Clarity doesn't appear all at once. Every conversation, every experience, and every small decision helps refine your direction. Your roadmap doesn't have to predict your entire future. It simply gives you a direction for your next steps. Waiting for certainty often delays progress. There is plenty of time for modification.



ACTION ITEMS | DEVELOP A PLAN FOR YOUR FUTURE CAREER

Write a 1-year, 5-year, and 10-year job goal roadmap. This will help you keep on track as you build toward your long term career plan.

**You Don't Need to Have it All Figured Out =
YOU JUST NEED TO START.**

**Work through these steps to
build career readiness as
early as possible.**

STAND OUT FROM AMONG YOUR PEERS!



Career Quest Workshop

**INDIVIDUAL | SMALL-GROUP
5-WEEK COACHING**

Understand Yourself

01 Understanding Yourself through Assessments to reveal strengths & Opportunities.

Research Labor
Market Data

02 Labor Market & Skills Research for real market data on trends and companies.

Learn Networking

03 Your Ideal Job narrowed to 2-4 target roles and build a credentialing plan to get there.

Perfect Your Pitch

04 Networking & Narrative elevator pitch, outreach scripts, and a working networking list.

Roadmap to Your
Ideal Job

05 Your Vision & Roadmap Present your vision board and walk away with a clear career roadmap.

If working through this guide raised more questions than it answered, that's normal.

That's what the Career Quest Workshop was built to help with.

I can help you every step of the way...



Phyllis Lehman

I'll be happy to answer any questions! Schedule a Free Discovery Call

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