

CONTENTS

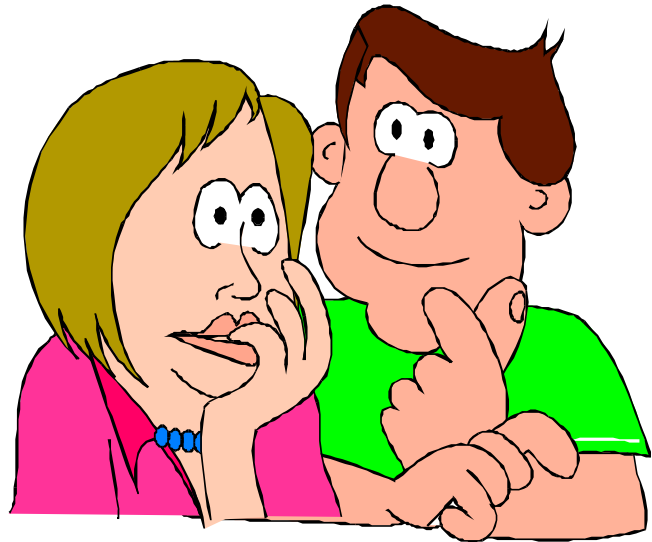
- 1-4 WHO AM I?**
- 5 WORK AREAS 1**
- 6 EXERCISE**
- 7 WORK AREAS 2**
- 8 YOUR SKILLS**
- 9 WHERE I LIVE**
- 10 CHOICES**
- 11-12 WORK**
- 13-14 TRAINING**
- 15-16 FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION**
- 17 REVIEW**
- 18-19 PERSONAL ACTION PLAN - EXAMPLES**
- 20 MY PERSONAL ACTION PLAN**



HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOURSELF?

This exercise is not asking you your name and address or other similar personal details. It is designed to find out how well you know yourself.

Often your own perception of yourself is not shared by others. For instance, someone may think themselves as being caring whilst others may think that the person is actually interfering in their affairs. There are many examples like this one. It might be useful to make a list of these.



EXERCISE

In groups of four or five people who are known to each other write your name on the exercise sheet overleaf then write down four or five words which you feel best describe you.

EXAMPLE: SHARING, COMPETITIVE, FRIENDLY, CARING, QUICK TEMPERED, THOUGHTFUL, HARD WORKING, LAZY, TRUSTING, (you can expand this list further yourself).

When everyone has written four or five words about themselves collect the papers together and re-distribute them making sure that no-one is returned their own sheet. The person receiving someone else's sheet should then consider whether they agree with the description that the person wrote about themselves. Sometimes the opinions of others are remarkably different. The person should write down four or five words of their own which they feel best describe the person in question.

Now take fifteen minutes to discuss the results. You may have agreed with all, some, or none of the descriptions originally written. What do the results show you both about yourself and about the opinions of others?

EXERCISE

2

NAME _____

THE FIVE WORDS WHICH BEST DESCRIBE ME ARE:

1

2

3

4

5

THE FIVE WORDS WHICH BEST DESCRIBE THE PERSON ABOVE ARE:

1

2

3

4

5

WHICH ACTIVITIES ARE YOU GOOD AT?

This exercise is concerned with facts. The first exercise related to your opinions of yourself, and the opinions others have of you. This kind of assessment is ***SUBJECTIVE***. Subjective means that the assessment is based on feelings and not facts. The following exercise is more ***OBJECTIVE*** than the first one but still involves some subjective contributions. Objective means making an assessment based on facts.

EXAMPLE

I am good at:

WORKING WITH MY HANDS

CARING FOR OTHERS

WORKING WITH NUMBERS

PAINTING AND DRAWING

WINNING AT GAMES

ORGANISING EVENTS

WORKING WITH COMPUTERS

UNDERSTANDING HOW THINGS WORK

Underline the ones which apply to you. In the example above the person has indicated that from the choices given, three fit that person's abilities. On the exercise on the following page you can also add your own categories.

You need to complete the exercise once, and then leave it for a while. Go back and see if you still agree with the choices you made or if you want to add more, or take any off. When you have completed the exercise twice you need to ***PRIORITISE*** your list. Prioritise means to put the list in order starting with the most important first. If you have a long list of things which you are good at, just prioritise the first five.

Leave the exercise for a few days then look at it again. Do you still agree with the way you prioritised the list. If not do it again.

EXERCISE

4

NAME _____

Underline the things you are good at in the list below:

WORKING WITH MY HANDS

CARING FOR OTHERS

WORKING WITH NUMBERS

PAINTING AND DRAWING

WINNING AT GAMES

ORGANISING EVENTS

WORKING WITH COMPUTERS

UNDERSTANDING HOW THINGS WORK

Now add your own particular abilities:

| | |
|---|--|
| 1 | |
| 2 | |
| 3 | |
| 4 | |
| 5 | |
| 6 | |
| 7 | |
| 8 | |

WORK AREAS 1

By now, anyone looking at the exercises you have already completed should have a fairly good idea about what you are like as a person and what your interests are. This exercise is concerned with linking the activities which you like to work areas which require similar skills. Although you may not be thinking about finding a job at the moment, it is important to begin to find out what sorts of jobs you could eventually be able to do.

EXERCISE

In the grid overleaf list the five activities which you prioritised in the last exercise. In the second column make a list of the kind of jobs which would require similar skills. Do not limit yourself; write down as many jobs as you can think of. In the third column list other skills required to do the job which you may not already have but which you would have to acquire if you realistically wanted to try for the job. Decide if you will be able to gain these skills.

EXAMPLE

| ACTIVITY | WORK AREA | SKILLS REQUIRED |
|------------------------|---|--|
| Working with Computers | Computer Programmer Computer Teacher | 'A' Level Maths Degree and Teacher Training Certificate |
| Painting and Drawing | Graphic Designer Signwriter | At least 'A' Levels Good GCSEs and Training |
| Caring for Others | Social Worker Nursing | CQSW Certificate Good GCSEs and Training |

As you can see from the example above, this exercise will take time to complete. Do not rush through it. You will have to take time to investigate which qualifications are required for each job which you identify, and additional skills required to do the job. Then you have to realistically decide whether you are prepared to work for the qualifications required.

This exercise is never really completed. As your interests develop you may find that you have new ideas or that your priorities change. Review this exercise regularly.

EXERCISE

6

| ACTIVITY | WORK AREA | ADDITIONAL SKILLS |
|----------|-----------|-------------------|
| 1. | | |
| 2. | | |
| 3. | | |
| 4. | | |
| 5. | | |

EXPANDING YOUR LIST OF WORK AREAS

This exercise is asking you to consider what other people around you are good at. By comparing how your friends and colleagues completed the last exercise you will get an idea of how comprehensively you completed yours. You do not have to change your preferences to match theirs; just compare the level of detail. The aim of this exercise is to begin to develop a bigger picture of how your group as a whole see themselves and the level of skills and abilities which you all possess.

EXERCISE

Firstly, compare the lists of the activities which each of you identified. Some will be similar whilst other will be quite different. Then compare the jobs which you identified which you thought would match your interests. You will probably see that your friends or colleagues thought of other jobs which match those interests. When you add your list to the similar lists made by others you may see a longer list of jobs than you identified yourself.

EXAMPLE

| PERSON 1 ACTIVITY | WORK AREA | PERSON 2 ACTIVITY | WORK AREA |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| PAINING AND DRAWING | GRAPHIC DESIGNER SIGNWRITER | PAINING AND DRAWING | ARTIST ARCHITECT |

You can see how the list develops. Repeat this exercise with all activity areas which are common to two or more people.

You need time to investigate which qualifications are required to do the jobs which you have prioritised. Use your careers library or ask your careers adviser to help you. Making a list in itself is very easy, but finding out more detail can be quite difficult. An easier way to find out about jobs and qualifications in detail is for each member of your group to take responsibility for one or two areas, and report back to the whole group on their findings. Negotiate a time limit for people to report back.

YOUR SKILLS



THE SKILLS WHICH YOU HAVE CAN BE CATEGORISED INTO FOUR AREAS.

1. FORMAL QUALIFICATIONS.

These are qualifications for which you will have received certificates and include; GCSEs NVQs.

2. WORK SKILLS.

These are the skills which you will have gained in part time or full time work and include practical skills like filing, computer skills, selling techniques, cash till work, etc.

3. PERSONAL SKILLS.

These include communications skills, your ability to work with others as a member of a team, or to work alone, and your personality etc.

4. TRANSFERRABLE SKILLS.

These are skills which you have obtained in parts 2 and 3 which you can transfer into other work areas. **EXAMPLE:** Experience of working with computers may be an indication that you would quickly understand and operate other types of electronic and computer applications. Transferrable skills are very important because they indicate your ability to adapt to situations and may also show that you have potential to develop and advance in employment terms. Many people fail to mention these skills in their CV.

MAKE A LIST OF YOUR SKILLS IN THESE AREAS.

| |
|-----------------------|
| FORMAL QUALIFICATIONS |
| WORK SKILLS |
| PERSONAL SKILLS |
| TRANSFERRABLE SKILLS |

WHERE I LIVE

You should investigate all of the possibilities open to you. This exercise involves collecting information.

EXERCISE

The area in which you live may have an effect on the kind of further/higher education you will receive, your job prospects, and your quality of life. It is very important for you to be aware of the openings which you may utilise whether they are in education, training, or work.

Find out what the five largest industries are in your area. The word 'industries' is used in a broad sense meaning all work areas.

| | NAME OF COMPANY | TYPE OF WORK (LIST JOBS) |
|---|-----------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | | |
| 2 | | |
| 3 | | |
| 4 | | |
| 5 | | |

Use the second column to list as many of the jobs which you know are linked with the industry.

Make a list of all the Colleges of further/higher education in your area. Include Technical Colleges, Training and Enterprise Councils, and any other training provider. Write to them or telephone and request their prospectus or information leaflets about courses. Your careers library may already have some of this information. Check it out.

| |
|---|
| 1 |
| 2 |
| 3 |
| 4 |
| 5 |
| 6 |
| 7 |
| 8 |
| 9 |
| 10 |
| Continue on a separate page if required.... |

At the end of your present course/s you will have to make a choice about what you will do next. Essentially there are four positive alternatives:

- You could decide to enter the world of work.
- You could choose to try for a training course.
- You may be interested in further education, (e.g. in combination with work).
- You may be interested in higher education.

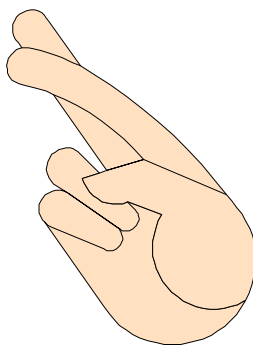
A fifth alternative which could be part of the first choice is unemployment.

You will probably already be aware which choices you are definitely not interested in. For instance you may not be at the stage where you have attained 'A' Levels, which means that higher education is out of the question in the short term at least. On the other hand you might be more practically minded than academically and so you will choose out of the first two options.

It is important to remember that unforeseen circumstances may force you to have to choose an option which at the moment you might not be interested in. If your grades are not good enough in your forthcoming examinations you may be forced to make other choices. The reverse could also be true.

You must also remember that in choosing one option others close for you. It is, therefore, very important to consider all four options carefully before deciding which one is for you.

On the following pages each option is taken separately and potential problems or implications are highlighted.



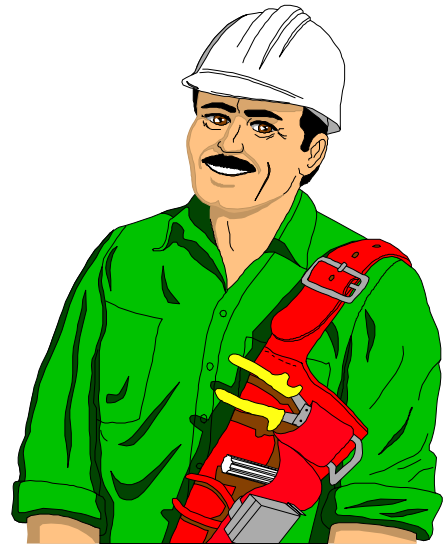
DON'T LEAVE IT TO CHANCE

ENTERING THE WORLD OF WORK

The most difficult part of this option is actually finding a suitable job in the first place. From earlier exercises you should be fairly clear what work areas interest you. If you are not clear then do not proceed until you do know because you are likely to be unsuccessful if you are unclear to start off with.

WHAT SORT OF JOB DO YOU WANT?

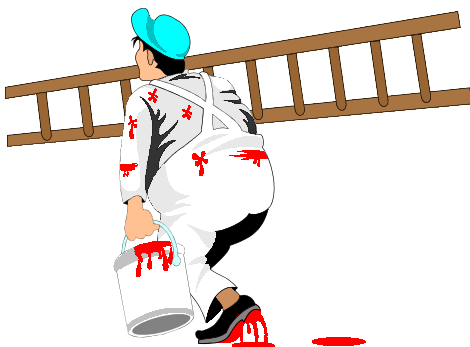
The worst answer you can give to this question is; **ANY JOB**. In the present climate there is such a demand for each job which becomes available that the applicant must be able to apply for each vacancy separately highlighting specific skills which relate to that particular job. General applications will always fail. To say that you are prepared to do any job means that you have not thought out the matter and are lazy. Employers will see it very clearly.



Go back to the earlier exercises. They will help you to decide what work areas are most suitable for you. When you do decide which work area interests you, you need to ask yourself various questions including:

- Why have I chosen this work area?
- What chances are there for promotion?
- Would I be happy doing this kind of work for the next five years?
- What do I eventually want to do?

In asking yourself such questions you will be able to think about mid and long term ambitions. If you plan ahead then you will be more in control of your life and be able to be clear whenever you have to make important career changing decisions.



You may find yourself entering your chosen work area on the 'bottom rung of the ladder'. Mid and long term planning will help you to gauge your own progress over the next three or five years. If you find that you are not progressing as you feel you should you can take action to remedy the situation. Or you may find that you are doing better than you thought and this will allow you use your action plan as a basis for further development.

EXERCISE

12

EXERCISE

This exercise asks you to consider various questions which you need to think about which all relate to your entry into the jobs market and which will influence the kind of work you will eventually do.

IS THE WORK AREA I HAVE CHOSEN THE BEST WHICH I CAN HOPE FOR? IF THE ANSWER IS NO, WHY IS THIS THE CASE?

IF I WORKED IN THIS AREA FOR THREE YEARS HOW MUCH DO I EXPECT TO HAVE GAINED IN TERMS OF PROMOTION OR JOB SATISFACTION?

WHEN I GET A JOB WHAT IS THE LOWEST LIMIT OF WAGES WHICH I WILL ACCEPT? IS THIS REALISTIC?

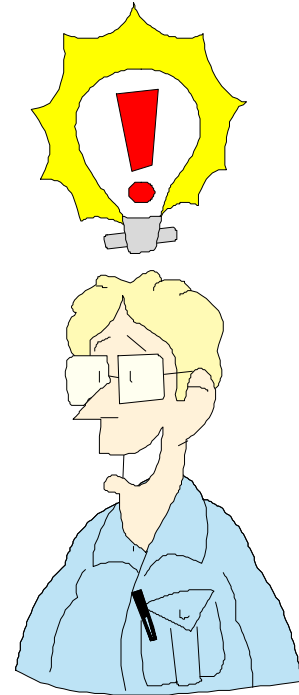
HOW MANY HOURS EACH WEEK AM I PREPARED TO WORK? WHAT ABOUT WEEKEND OR NIGHT WORKING?

HOW FAR AM I PREPARED TO TRAVEL TO GET TO WORK? AM I PREPARED TO WORK IN ANOTHER TOWN? WHAT EFFECT WILL THIS HAVE ON THE AMOUNT I WILL EARN?

IN EMPLOYMENT TERMS WHERE WILL I BE IN FIVE YEARS TIME?

The reason why some people choose training courses rather than further or higher education is that they tend to be more practically based. If you feel that you are more practically minded than academically, this choice may be a good one for you. Almost all training courses lead to qualifications which can then help you to find suitable employment.

There are many types of establishment which run training courses and you should try to be very clear about which place offers the best training course for you. Find out about all the colleges and other providers of training courses in your locality. Start your search in your school/college careers library. You can also write and ask training providers to send you their prospectus and other useful information. It is often the case that certain training providers specialise in certain courses. Find out if there is a specialist training provider in your area for the course you are looking for.



Other training alternatives are government sponsored schemes or getting a job where training is provided. Government sponsored schemes vary widely in the quality of training provided. You must dig deep in your investigations to find out what sort of quality is available in such schemes. Finding a job where training is given as part of the job is quite difficult. Employers are happier to employ people who already have the necessary qualifications. Often where training is given as part of the job, wages are poor. However, do investigate this possibility fully because sometimes there are surprisingly good opportunities available, especially with larger employers.

Consult with your careers adviser to find out about the type of training courses most suitable for you. There are many matters which need close consideration if you want to choose this option. The exercise on the next page will ask you to consider some of these.

EXERCISE

WHY DO I WANT TO CHOOSE A TRAINING COURSE RATHER THAN A JOB OR FURTHER/HIGHER EDUCATION?

WHICH TRAINING COURSE INTERESTS ME? WHY THIS COURSE?

HOW DOES THIS COURSE RELATE TO MY CHOICE OF A JOB?

WHY HAVE I CHOSEN THIS PARTICULAR TRAINING CENTRE?

WHICH QUALIFICATIONS DO I EXPECT TO GET IF I AM SUCCESSFUL IN THIS COURSE?

HOW MANY YEARS OF TRAINING WILL I REQUIRE BEFORE I CAN GET THE JOB I WANT?

WHAT WILL I DO IF I AM NOT SUCCESSFUL IN THIS COURSE?

WHERE WILL I BE IN FIVE YEARS TIME?

People choose this option for a variety of reasons which sometimes are not very good reasons. A large number of students stay on in education because they feel that there is no real alternative. A good job is very hard to find, government schemes are often inappropriate, and it seems that travelling along the same road of education is easier than thinking of an alternative.

It is very important that you choose to stay on in education for the right reasons. Take a long time to think about the courses you want to study and, in particular, how your choices relate to your eventual career aims. It is sometimes difficult to relate courses to careers but it is vital that you take advice from a careers adviser before deciding. Ask other people as well, whose opinions you value.



If your career choice is a science based one, you will clearly choose science based courses. But do not forget that in the 'European' future, where trade and other barriers are disappearing, a foreign language might also be useful. You should also look at growth industries and think about how you will fit in with these. An example of this is the rapid increase in information technology related opportunities.

You need to plan as far ahead as possible. If you intend to go to university then the choice of courses at 'A' Level will determine the type of courses which will be possible at university.

On the next page you will find some questions which you should consider before making choices about further or higher education.

EXERCISE

WHY DO I WANT TO ENTER FULL TIME FURTHER/HIGHER EDUCATION?

IS THIS A GOOD REASON?

WHICH SUBJECTS DO I WANT TO STUDY?

HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO MY CAREER CHOICE?

WHAT DO I WANT TO DO AT THE END OF THESE STUDIES?

WHAT WILL I DO IF I DO NOT SUCCEED IN FURTHER/HIGHER EDUCATION?

HOW MANY YEARS STUDY WILL IT TAKE FOR ME TO ACHIEVE MY AIMS?

WHERE WILL I BE IN FIVE YEARS TIME?

NOTES ON MAKING AN ACTION PLAN.

You must be logical, organised, and be prepared to investigate many possibilities if the action plan you finally design is going to have any real benefit for you. As a guide consider the following points.

CONSIDER YOUR PRESENT POSITION. You need to consider what skills you already have, and why you want to have a personal action plan. The eventual aim of an action plan is to get the right job whether that is a few months away or a few years. Depending on your own abilities and determination you may be very ambitious and then the action plan is likely to be more of a long term plan. On the other hand you may be designing an action plan to get you into work in the next few months.

DEFINING YOUR AIMS. Deciding which course, job or work areas you are interested in.

CLARIFYING YOUR CHOICES. You need to decide whether your choices are possible and attainable. You need to talk to advisers, family, friends, as well as teachers. You may be able to go on training courses which help you to decide. You must find out if you are just projecting an idea of what you want or if it is realistically possible.

IDENTIFY ALTERNATIVES AND POSSIBILITIES. There is nothing wrong with looking at alternatives to the choices you originally made. Remember, when you finally take the decision you will be 'locked in' to a particular career path. Have a short time to experience other choices.

WORK OUT POSSIBLE OUTCOMES. Talk to people who are already in the type of work or course which you hope to do. What are the medium and long term consequences of your decisions and what is the best you can hope for, and the worst.

ELIMINATE ALTERNATIVES. Having looked at alternatives, narrow down your choices from an informed position; rather than choosing one path and then ignoring others it is better to consider everything and then decide through understanding, to drop some alternatives.

START THE PROCESS. When you are happy that you have found out all that you can, you need to start to follow the path you have chosen. Make up your personal action plan and follow it.

EXAMPLE

18

NAME *J. BISHOP*

DATE *05/09/97*

THE PRESENT

SCHOOL/COLLEGE *MOOR HIGH SCH.*

AGE *16*

SUBJECTS *English, Maths, Physics, French, Art, History,
Economics, Geography, Technical Studies.*

MAIN INTERESTS *Sport, Current Affairs, Environmental Issues.*

THE FUTURE

CAREER CHOICE *I want to work in the Caring Professions. I want to enter at a higher level as an Administrator in health for the elderly.*

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS *GCSE's, then 'A' Levels, and possibly a Degree. After that possibly a Social Work qualification.*

TIME SCALE *2 years for 'A' Levels. 4 years for a Degree and Social Work qualification. possibly 1 year of study after that.*

IN ONE YEARS TIME I WILL BE:

Doing 'A' Levels.

IN THREE YEARS TIME I WILL BE:

At University.

IN FIVE YEARS TIME I WILL BE:

Thinking about or will have started my career in Health Services.

EXAMPLE

19

NAME *P. SMITH*

DATE *05/09/97*

THE PRESENT

SCHOOL/COLLEGE *MOOR HIGH SCH.*

AGE *16*

SUBJECTS *Design and Technology, Maths, English, Art, Geography, History, German.*

MAIN INTERESTS *Woodworking, making things, sport.*

THE FUTURE

CAREER CHOICE *I want to leave school after GCSEs, and go on a training course to learn to make things, furniture, or fine carvings.*

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS *No real requirements but some good GCSEs passes would be helpful generally.*

TIME SCALE *Possibly I will be trained in two years time.*

IN ONE YEARS TIME I WILL BE:

Training.

IN THREE YEARS TIME I WILL BE:

Working in a semi-skilled job.

IN FIVE YEARS TIME I WILL BE:

Fully trained craftsman.

MY PERSONAL ACTION PLAN

20

NAME _____

DATE _____

THE PRESENT

SCHOOL/COLLEGE

AGE

SUBJECTS

MAIN INTERESTS

THE FUTURE

CAREER CHOICE

ACADEMIC
REQUIREMENTS

TIME SCALE

IN ONE YEARS TIME I WILL BE:

IN THREE YEARS TIME I WILL BE:

IN FIVE YEARS TIME I WILL BE: