

Choosing a Career

Making the choices that are right for you

A first step in deciding what to do after high school is to talk with your school counselor or a teacher for advice. Ask your counselor about taking an aptitude test or interest inventory to find your strengths, weaknesses, and interests to discover potential career choices that are right for you. You can access a free self-assessment called the Career Finder at www.studentaid.ed.gov/myfsa.

1

Learn about yourself.

- **Values**—What is important to you?
- **Interests**—What appeals to you?
- **Aptitude**—What are you good at?

2

Talk to people.

Once you've narrowed your career choices, talk to people who are working in that field or, if possible, find a part-time or volunteer job in that field.

It's helpful to ask questions such as, "What's good and bad about this job?" and "How did you learn your trade?"

There are many sources of career and job outlook information available—go to your school library, public library, or school counselor.

3

Consider how much training you will need for the career you're interested in.

- **High school diploma:**
cashier, receptionist, retail salesperson, security guard, waiter, or waitress
- **Special career training (e.g., trade/vocational school, apprenticeship):**
auto service technician or mechanic, cosmetologist, police officer, truck driver
- **College degree:**
accountant, engineer, forensic science technician, registered nurse, pilot, teacher, public relations specialist, video game designer
- **Graduate or professional degree:**
college professor, doctor, dentist, lawyer, veterinarian, research scientist, architect

For information about specific careers, see the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* at www.bls.gov/oco or in a library. As of fall 2010, there is a Spanish-language version of the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*; visit www.bls.gov/es/ooH for details.

For information about financial aid for college or trade/vocational schools, see www.studentaid.ed.gov.

