

Exploring Careers: What's Right for You?

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INTRODUCTION

The only thing certain about the future is change, and nowhere is that more evident than in the workplace. Fueled by rapid technological growth, the traditional and relatively simple workplace of the past has been radically transformed in ways we cannot yet fully picture. Not only will today's students need to be better educated and technically trained to compete in the high performance labor market of the 21st century, but they will have a staggering array of career possibilities to choose from.

Faced with this burgeoning number of occupational choices, it is not difficult to understand why many students feel overwhelmed. The traditional, often haphazard routes to career decision-making—what family and friends do, how much money a job pays, or parental expectations—may no longer suffice.

Having observed people who are dissatisfied with their jobs, students may be afraid they are making the wrong career choice. Unsure of their own priorities and special needs, they may be hesitant to choose any career, afraid that if they commit to one, they could be overlooking another, even better choice. Where will I fit in? they ask. In what kind of work can I find both success and satisfaction?

Exploring Careers: What's Right for You? helps students discover the answers to these critical questions by making clear the powerful link between personality type and career satisfaction. People who enjoy their work and are successful at it, this upbeat program asserts, are doing work that matches their personality—work that draws on the strengths of that particular personality.

Moreover, since it is now the norm for people to change jobs at least six times in their lives, **Exploring Careers: What's Right for You?** presents career planning not as a single, one-time-only choice, but as part of an ongoing, lifelong process. By identifying your personality type and the careers that are compatible with it, the program tells viewers, you greatly increase the likelihood of choosing a career you'll both enjoy and be successful at.

The operative tool the program uses to help viewers identify their personality type is the Holland Hexagon, an approach to career planning developed by psychologist John Holland and used successfully by many school and career counselors.

Theorizing that a complex interaction of genetic, environmental, social, and cultural forces molds each of us into an identifiable pattern of thought, perception and behavior, Holland divides his geometric figure into six personality types that his research shows to be strongly linked to six career categories.

Holland has labeled these personality types Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional, each a unique combination of interests, abilities, and ways of looking at the world. To help students remember these six types more easily, the program characterizes them by more vivid, action-oriented labels:

Realistic	=	Doer
Investigative	=	Thinker
Artistic	=	Creator
Social	=	Helper
Enterprising	=	Persuader
Conventional	=	Organizer

The program begins by showing students that the first step in career planning is to identify their personality type. Viewers learn that each of us is made up of a combination of three personality types: one that is dominant, another that is second, and another that is third. In Part 1 of the program, each personality type is dramatized through vignettes which are followed by on-screen quizzes. By answering the questions in the quizzes, students are able to determine their own special blend of personality types.

The second part of the program explores careers that can fit each personality type, with emphasis on those where the potential for jobs will be greatest. Viewers meet workers who have found success and satisfaction in the workplace by pursuing careers that match their personalities. After each of these workers describes his or her job and its satisfactions, the program lists a variety of careers for the same dominant personality type, but differing secondary and third types.

To further extend the program's scope and usefulness, the Teacher's Guide provides thought-provoking discussion questions, quizzes, a number of suggested activities, and an extensive bibliography. In addition, expanded versions of the on-screen personality quizzes are reproduced on pages 21-26. Your students can take these quizzes to determine their personality types.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This program is designed to help students:

- Recognize that people who enjoy and are successful at their work are most often pursuing a career that matches their personality type.
- Explore the Holland Hexagon and its categories of personality types and compatible careers.
- Identify their own personality type by comparing their interests, aptitudes, likes and dislikes to the Holland categories.
- Understand that everyone is a combination of personality types.
- Learn about a variety of career fields, including those with the greatest job potential for the 21st century.

PROGRAM SUMMARY

The video opens on a group of high school students standing in front of a Career Day display. Excited by the variety of careers listed, but overwhelmed by the thought of deciding on one, the students turn for help to their guidance counselor, Ms. Olmyer.

Ms. Olmyer explains that too often people make career choices based on how much money they think they'll make, or their parents' expectations, or on what their friends do. The key to finding a career you will like and be successful at, she says, is to choose one that draws on the strengths of your personality. So the first step in the career-finding process is to identify your personality type.

Part 1: Personality Type

Ms. Olmyer introduces the students to the Holland Hexagon, a system developed by psychologist John Holland as a way of identifying personality types. The six personality types are Doer, Thinker, Creator, Helper, Persuader, and Organizer. She explains that according to Holland, each personality type has its own interests, abilities, and ways of looking at things and that certain careers tend to fit each one.

Mini-dramas explore and illustrate the six personality types. Each mini-drama is followed by a quiz which the students in the video take to determine their personality type. (The quizzes, with additional questions, are reproduced on pages 21-26 of this guide.)

The Doer is represented by Joyce, shown fixing her bike for an upcoming race. Viewers learn that she likes working with her hands, is athletic, thrifty, independent, and not overly concerned with what other people think.

The next personality, a Thinker, is represented by Lou. Although it is difficult to dramatize a Thinker's actions, since most of it happens in the person's head, viewers learn that Lou is math- and science-oriented, curious, painstaking, intellectual, and unconventional.

The Creator is represented by Meg. She's artistic, nonconformist, and far from shy about trying out original ideas or doing things her way. The Helper, Stan, is sensitive to the needs of others. When he notices that his friend Lou is unhappy about something, Stan shows his caring concern, listens attentively, and helps his friend solve his problem.

The students interrupt the mini-dramas when they realize that they have traits of more than one personality type. How is this possible? Ms. Olmyer explains that no one is just one personality type. Everyone is a mix of types, but one is usually dominant, another second, and still another third.

The mini-dramas resume with Ann, a Persuader, who self-confidently and successfully talks a friend into dressing up and entering a competition for a Halloween dance. Viewers learn that persuaders are energetic, ambitious, competitive, and usually in a position of leadership.

The sixth and last personality type is the Organizer, represented by Max. Detail-oriented and orderly, Max likes working with numbers and records, and analyzing information.

Now that the students know their personality types, they can look at specific careers.

Part 2: Career Choices

The next day the students meet again and Ms. Olmyer talks about the job prospects for the 21st century. Although it is impossible to predict with accuracy where the greatest number of jobs will be, she says good bets are in fields that deal with an aging population, health care, leisure activities, education and training, and computers. But, she reminds the students, that when choosing a career, their focus should be on finding work that matches their personality type. She shows how it all fits together by investigating different jobs in each category of the Holland Hexagon.

Careers for Doers, independent people who enjoy working with their hands, are represented by a mechanic who talks about his job servicing heating, air conditioning, and refrigeration units. What he likes best is the challenge—using his skills to find solutions to mechanical problems—and that no two jobs are alike. He also likes having the freedom to work out his own schedule.

The mechanic tells viewers that while most of his training came on the job, he also took vocational courses in high school. What's important, he says, is to have a good, well-rounded education that includes math for figuring billing and computing repairs; language skills for reading complicated manuals; science, especially chemistry, because machine systems use many chemicals; and good communication skills for dealing with customers.

Amy is a Doer, but a mechanic's job doesn't interest her, so she consults a list of other Doer jobs—carpenter, hairdresser, air traffic controller, caterer, and chef, which appeals to her.

James wonders how a mechanic and a chef, who do such different work, can both be Doers. Ms. Olmyer points out the dominant personality of both is Doer, but their secondary types differ. The mechanic's secondary type is probably Thinker, while Amy's is most likely Creator. She reminds the students that when they explore careers they have to consider their entire personality—that means their first, second, and third types.

Lana, a Thinker, is interested in a computer-related career, so the students look at the job of a computer programmer. Every business that uses computers needs someone who can make these machines do what they're expected to do, the computer programmer says. It's work that requires not only good problem-solving skills, but the ability to think logically and analytically.

Viewers learn that educational requirements for programmers vary from vocational school or community college to a four-year college degree, which more and more employers are demanding. Some even require a graduate degree. The more training you have, says the programmer, the better your job outlook.

When Lana says that she can't consider graduate school because she will have a hard enough time paying for college, Ms. Olmyer talks about the different ways students can continue their education, including working for a while and then returning to school, or combining work and school. "There are always possibilities," she says. "And that applies to everyone—and all careers."

The students look at other Thinker careers, including librarian, lab technician, science teacher, sociologist, chemist, and psychologist, all of which require college degrees. One Thinker career that doesn't is a radiologic technologist, who works with high-tech equip

ment like MRI's and X-rays. The training for this job is generally a two-year program at a hospital.

The next personality type is a Creator and the career that's investigated involves graphic design. A graphic artist describes how she uses computer graphics to create posters and CD covers. What she likes best about her work is the constant challenge to be creative, and the endless possibilities technology offers. But she also reminds students of the importance of being able to accept criticism without taking it personally. Graphic design is mainly learned on the job, she says, but usually requires an associate of arts degree. Computer training, of course, is a must.

Although James' dominant personality type is Creator, he's not interested in graphic design or the other Creator careers suggested—actor, photographer, bookstore owner, multimedia director, electronic publishing writer, interior decorator, and art teacher. Because his secondary personality type is Persuader, Ms. Olmyer suggests a career that combines the two—a video production manager.

A video production manager describes her work, which includes being responsible for everything needed to produce a video from casting, wardrobe, and permits, to feeding the cast and crew. She explains how the job draws on both personality types. For example, she uses the Creator part of her personality when she finds a location and visualizes how it will look on camera. And she uses the Persuader part when she has to convince the owner to let the production use it.

When Steve asks about careers for Helpers, Ms. Olmyer points out that many of the jobs that appeal to this personality type are on the list of fastest growing careers. She reminds the students that with the increase

in the population, all health-related jobs, like physical therapists, physical therapist assistants, and home health aides, will be in demand.

Steve, a Helper, Thinker, and Doer, asks Ms. Olmyer to suggest a health-related career that doesn't involve long-term training, because he has to find work as soon as he graduates from high school. She suggests an emergency medical technician.

To do this work and withstand the constant stress, an EMS technician tells viewers, you have to be strong, both physically and emotionally. But in its Helper aspect it is very rewarding. Technicians are often called on to be clinician, clergy, and social worker, sometimes all three at once. They have to deal with many different people, so they have to be able to communicate well and work as part of a team. Training varies from place to place, but usually consists of 120 hours or more of basic training, plus ten hours of internship at a hospital followed by exams that demand a background in math and science.

Not all Helper jobs involve health care and the students look at some others: day care worker, social worker, retirement counselor, leisure activities director, health and wellness counselor, and career counseling and teaching, which is Ms. Olmyer's career.

Next come Persuaders, energetic, take-charge people who like dealing with the public. Many careers that appeal to this personality type are also in areas with the greatest potential for jobs, such as the hospitality industry—travel, restaurants, and hotels.

The Persuader career explored is an assistant hotel manager, who works in the hotel's front office. She deals directly with the guests and sees to it that everything goes smoothly. Her duties involve handling special requests

and complaints, so good mediation and conflict resolution skills are a must. Knowledge of other languages is a plus, because guests can come from all over the world.

A four-year college degree in hotel or restaurant management is the best way to get started in this field. But students can also take programs at a vocational school or community college.

Other jobs for Persuader types are retail store manager or owner, public relations representative, real estate broker, fund raiser and sales representative, one of the fastest growing careers.

Last, the students explore careers for Organizers, people who prefer working with details in an orderly structured environment.

One Organizer job in great demand is a medical records technician, which involves coordinating and consolidating all records related to a patient's health care. It's a job that requires not only an understanding of medical terminology, but also the ability to concentrate, pay attention to detail, and juggle demands for records and information from doctors, insurance companies, emergency rooms, and patients.

Requirements to become a medical records technician are a two-year associate's degree or accreditation from an Independent Study Program, plus good computer skills. However, some hospitals promote promising medical records clerks with two to four years' experience. Besides hospitals, nursing homes, home health agencies, and large medical practices employ medical records technicians. Other jobs for Organizer types are bank teller, administrative assistant, medical secretary and airline reservation agent.

Ms. Olmyer reminds students that although the field they want to work in is a very important decision, their primary concern should be the work they will be performing in that field. When you do the kind of work that suits your personality, she advises, you increase the odds that you will enjoy it and be successful.

She concludes by reviewing the steps students need to take in thinking about a career: 1) discover as much as you can about yourself by determining your first, second, and third personality types; 2) use books and computers to see which career fields and jobs are compatible with your types; 3) find out what it takes to get there, what education or training is required. Then, she adds, "Make it happen for you."

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- (1) Does it surprise you to learn that people change careers an average of six times in their lives? Can you offer examples of family members or other adults you know who have changed careers often?
- (2) What does the guidance counselor, Ms. Olmyer, mean when she says that “picking a career is a process”? What does she mean when she says the first step in choosing a career is to get on the right “staircase”? What would be the wrong “staircase”?
- (3) Do you know someone whose work doesn’t fit his/her personality? Is the person successful? Is he/she happy? Why do you think that person chose that career?
- (4) Describe the Holland Hexagon. What is the idea behind it?
- (5) Describe the Doer personality type. Would you say you fit this type or have any of the same characteristics? Explain. Do you know anyone who has a job that would appeal to a Doer? Explain whether you think the job is right for that person.
- (6) Describe the Thinker personality type. Would you say you fit this type or have any of the same characteristics? Explain. Do you know anyone who has a job that would appeal to a Thinker? Explain whether you think the job is right for that person.
- (7) Describe the Creator personality type. Would you say you fit this type or have any of the same char-

- acteristics? Explain. Do you know anyone who has a job that would appeal to a Creator? Explain whether you think the job is right for that person.
- (8) Describe the Helper personality type. Would you say you fit this type or have any of the same characteristics? Explain. Do you know anyone who has a job that would appeal to a Helper? Explain whether you think the job is right for that person.
- (9) Describe the Persuader personality type. Would you say you fit this type or have any of the same characteristics? Explain. Do you know anyone who has a job that would appeal to a Persuader? Explain whether you think the job is right for that person.
- (10) Describe the Organizer personality type. Would you say you fit this type or have any of the same characteristics? Explain. Do you know anyone who has a job that would appeal to an Organizer? Explain whether you think the job is right for that person.
- (11) What are the career fields that Ms. Olmyer predicts will be in great demand in the next century? Explain why.
- (12) Discuss why the mechanic's Doer personality matches his interests and abilities and makes his career a good one for him. Why does he recommend a "good, well-rounded education" as a prerequisite for his line of work? Name some other careers for Doers.
- (13) What does Ms. Olmyer mean when she says that although one type is dominant, everyone is a mix

of personality types? Why is it important to know your secondary and even your third personality type?

- (14) Discuss why the computer programmer's Thinker personality type matches his interests and abilities and makes his career a good one for him. What do you think his secondary personality type is likely to be? Why?
- (15) Discuss why the graphic artist's Creator personality type matches her interests and abilities and makes her career a good one for her. What do you think her secondary and third personality types are likely to be? Why?
- (16) Why does a career as an emergency medical technician appeal to someone whose personality type is Helper but whose secondary and third types are Thinker and Doer?
- (17) Name some careers for Helpers that don't involve health care. Choose one of these careers and tell what you think the person's secondary and perhaps third personality types are likely to be.
- (18) Discuss why the assistant hotel manager's Persuader personality type matches her interests and abilities and makes this career a good one for her. Name another career for people with Persuader personality types. What secondary and perhaps third personality types do you think a person would have to have in order to be satisfied in the job?
- (19) Discuss why the medical records technician's Organizer personality type matches his interests and abilities and makes his career a good one for

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him. What do you think his secondary and perhaps third personality types are likely to be? Name some other careers for people with Organizer personality types?

- (20) Why is choosing the type of work you will be performing in a career field a more important decision than the field itself?
- (21) What steps should you take before deciding on a career you want to pursue?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- (1) Each mini-drama in the video is followed by an on-screen quiz designed to help students identify their personality type. Expanded versions of these quizzes will be found on pages 21 to 26 of this Guide for you to photocopy and hand out. Have students answer “Yes” or “No” to the questions to learn which personality type they are most like, which is second, and which is third. Use the students’ reactions to their findings as a springboard for class discussion.
- (2) As the video notes, something as important as career choice shouldn’t be left to chance. After they have identified their dominant personality type, ask interested students to select career fields that appeal to them. Then using books and computer data, ask them to research five or more jobs in each field most compatible with their type and report back to the class. Their research should include each job’s duties and responsibilities and the training required.
- (3) Each of the six personality types is a unique combination of interests, values, and abilities. While everyone has one type that is dominant, we have traits of other personality types as well. Photocopy and hand out copies of the quiz, “Recognizing Personality Combinations,” on page 28 of this Guide, and ask students to figure out what most likely are the dominant and secondary personality types of the fictional students described. Answers will be found below. Put the names and personality combinations of each example on the chalkboard, then ask the class to brainstorm a list of compatible careers for each.

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- (4) Of the 500 occupations that the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics forecasts will be open to workers over the next decade, 21 are not only growing faster or much faster than average, but will have hundreds of thousands of openings and higher-than-average earnings. These occupations are listed on page 30 of this Guide. Ask students to select one or more that interest them and prepare a report for the class. Have them research the skills and aptitudes needed, the educational or training requirements, and the working conditions. Ask them to analyze the nature of the work in that field—the variety of jobs offered—and decide which personality types would find the most satisfaction in which jobs.

Answers to “Recognizing Personality Combinations”
(from quiz on page 28)

1. Ted is most likely a Persuader/Helper.
2. Lisa is most likely a Thinker/Creator.
3. Doug is most likely a Creator/Doer.
4. Tara is most likely a Helper/Organizer.
5. Jason is most likely an Organizer/Thinker.
6. Erica is most likely a Persuader/Doer.

What Personality Type Are You?
ARE YOU A DOER?

Mark *Yes* or *No* next to each of the following questions to learn how much you resemble a Doer personality.

- Do you enjoy working with your hands?
- Are you mechanically inclined and good at fixing things?
- Do you prefer concrete problems, not abstract ones?
- Do you like working outdoors?
- Are you athletic?
- Do you prefer to “tell it like it is” rather than beat around the bush?
- Do you like activities like fishing, hiking, camping?
- Do you hate getting dressed up?
- Would your friends call you:
 - practical?
 - reliable?
 - physically strong?

Total Yes Answers _____

What Personality Type Are You?
ARE YOU A THINKER?

Mark *Yes* or *No* next to each of the following questions to learn how much you resemble a Thinker personality.

- ___ Do you like math and science?
 - ___ Do you prefer to work alone?
 - ___ Do you enjoy finding solutions to complicated problems?
 - ___ Would you call your attitudes unconventional?
 - ___ Do you have confidence in your intellectual abilities?
 - ___ Is it easy for you to get wrapped up in a project?
 - ___ Do you like games that require you to solve a series of puzzles?
 - ___ Do you dislike being put in charge or having to persuade people to your point of view?
- Would your friends call you:
- ___ curious?
 - ___ analytical?
 - ___ independent?

Total *Yes* Answers _____

What Personality Type Are You?
ARE YOU A CREATOR?

Mark *Yes* or *No* next to each of the following questions to learn how much you resemble a Creator personality.

- ___ Do you enjoy music, art, and drama?
- ___ Do you prefer to work in a free, unstructured environment?
- ___ Do you like small, intimate groups?
- ___ Do you find it hard to stick to a routine?
- ___ Do you prefer to do things your own way?
- ___ Are you willing to take a risk and try something new?
- ___ Do you keep a diary or journal?
- ___ Do you dislike activities that require you to do the same thing over and over again?
- ___ Would your friends call you:
 - ___ unconventional?
 - ___ expressive?
 - ___ imaginative?

Total *Yes* Answers _____

What Personality Type Are You?
ARE YOU A HELPER?

Mark *Yes* or *No* next to each of the following questions to learn how much you resemble a Helper personality.

- ___ Are you sensitive to the needs of others?
 - ___ Do you find it easy to talk to other people?
 - ___ Do you enjoy teaching and tutoring others?
 - ___ Do you like to help people solve their personal problems?
 - ___ Do you dislike working with machines and tools?
 - ___ Do you enjoy working in groups?
 - ___ Do your friends come to you when they need someone to talk to?
 - ___ Have you ever done volunteer work to help needy people? If not, would you like to?
- Would your friends call you:
- ___ caring?
 - ___ cooperative?
 - ___ friendly?

Total Yes Answers _____

What Personality Type Are You?
ARE YOU A PERSUADER?

Mark *Yes* or *No* next to each of the following questions to learn how much you resemble a Persuader personality.

___ Do you try to convince people to see things your way?

___ Do you like to take a leadership position?

___ Do you enjoy making things happen?

___ Do you like competition?

___ Are you good at organizing activities for other people?

___ Are you energetic and ambitious?

___ Do you like to talk in class or participate in debates?

___ Would you like to be elected an officer in your school's student government?

Would your friends call you:

___ sociable?

___ ambitious?

___ assertive?

Total *Yes* Answers _____

What Personality Type Are You?
ARE YOU AN ORGANIZER?

Mark *Yes* or *No* next to each of the following questions to learn how much you resemble an Organizer personality.

- ___ Do you prefer a well-ordered environment?
 - ___ Do you like working with numbers and records?
 - ___ Are you most comfortable with steady routines?
 - ___ Are you careful, orderly, and calm?
 - ___ Are you good at analyzing information?
 - ___ Do you value material possessions and status?
 - ___ Do you like to collect things like sports cards, coins, or stamps?
 - ___ On a trip, are you the person who locates the destination on the map and finds the best route?
- Would your friends call you:
- ___ steady?
 - ___ orderly?
 - ___ dependable?

Total Yes Answers _____

What Personality Type Am I?

Now that you have answered the questions, count up the number of Yes answers you have put down for each type.

I have ____ Yes answers for the Doer Personality Type.

I have ____ Yes answers for the Thinker Personality Type.

I have ____ Yes answers for the Creator Personality Type.

I have ____ Yes answers for the Helper Personality Type.

I have ____ Yes answers for the Persuader Personality Type.

I have ____ Yes answers for the Organizer Personality Type.

Using your highest, second-highest, and third-highest scores as a guide, fill in the blanks below.

I am most like the _____
Personality Type.

I am next most like the _____
Personality Type.

The third type I am most like is the _____
Personality Type.

Recognizing Personality Combinations

What do you think are the dominant and secondary personality types of the students described below?

- (1) Outgoing and energetic, Ted likes to make things happen. As business manager of the school yearbook, he's had a banner year soliciting ads. He likes to engage his teachers in friendly argument, and has recently organized a SADD program in his school. On weekends and during the summer, Ted volunteers as a Little League coach. Last year his team won their division title. He's hoping that this year's team will repeat as champs.

Ted is most likely a _____ / _____

- (2) Lisa has been spending most of her free time on the science project she hopes to enter in the city-wide science fair, taking advantage of the school's lab equipment to examine slides of the specimens she has collected on nature walks. Since one of her hobbies is sketching, she plans to give her project an artistic mounting. For ideas, she's been visiting museums in her area to see how expert designers have solved the problem.

Lisa is most likely a _____ / _____

- (3) Doug has liked drawing and sketching for as long as he can remember, but ever since discovering computers and their ability to create all kinds of art, he's been deep into designing computer graphics. Because he needs more room for his computer equipment, his parents have given him permission to convert a section of the garage into a studio. So Doug is spending most of his time putting up dry walls and painting his new space.

Doug is most likely a _____ / _____

(4) Tara is the bookkeeper for the school's Junior Achievement program. She loves animals and helps care for the family's two dogs, overseeing their training and feeding and walking them twice a day. The older couples who live on either side of her house pay her to walk their dogs along with hers when they are away. As a volunteer on Saturdays at the local nursing home, Tara always brings her dogs with her as the elderly patients enjoy seeing them. In order to keep her busy life in order, Tara keeps a schedule of her activities posted on a bulletin board over her desk. She also has one taped in her locker at school.

Tara is most likely a _____ / _____

(5) Jason has always been fascinated by statistics. At the beginning of the baseball season each year, he sets up a program on his computer so he can track the statistics of all major league players. He updates his files on a regular basis. Jason also has an extensive, and very valuable baseball card collection, which he has catalogued on his computer. Some of his prize cards are very rare. He keeps those in special holders that he bought at a sports card collector's show.

Jason is most likely a _____ / _____

(6) Erica is captain of the school's softball team and is in charge of the team picnic at the end of the season. To raise money for the picnic, she is organizing a bake sale, so she spent the weekend baking brownies and cookies which she and her teammates will sell in the school cafeteria. Erica is thinking of running for Senior Class President and plans to ask her teammates to campaign for her.

Erica is most likely a _____ / _____

Occupations for the 21st Century with Highest Total Job Openings

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that into the year 2005, the following 21 occupations will have the fastest growth, highest earnings, and largest numbers of openings. Occupations are listed by projected total job openings (in thousands) in descending order:

Teachers, secondary school	- 782
Registered Nurses	- 740
Systems Analysts	- 481
Licensed Practical Nurses	- 341
Social Workers	- 288
Police Patrol Officers	- 271
Lawyers	- 268
Teachers, special education	- 262
Physicians	- 205
Correctional Officers	- 194
Computer Engineers	- 191
Residential Counselors	- 158
Personnel, training, and labor relations specialists	- 129
Heating, Refrigeration, & Air-Conditioning Mechanics	- 125
Instructors and Coaches, sports and physical training	- 119
Artists and Commercial Artists	- 117
Designers, except interior	- 113
Writers and Editors, including technical writers	- 111
Management Analysts	- 109
Instructors, adult (nonvocational) education	- 107
Teachers and instructors, vocational education	- 104

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Shorto, Russell. Careers for People Who Like People. Brookfield, CT: The Millbrook Press, 1992.

Specialty Occupational Outlook: Professions. Joyce Jakubiak, Editor. Detroit, MI: Gale Research, Inc., 1995.

Yates, Martin. Career Smarts: Jobs with a Future. New York: Ballantine Books, 1997.

(Note to Educators: Books on specific careers, too numerous to mention here, can be found at the Job Information Centers that are a feature of many public libraries.)

Additional Resources

A variety of career planning aids, including John Holland's work is published by:

Psychological Assessment Resources, Inc.
PO Box 98
Odessa, FL 33556

Other career-related videos published by SUNBURST:

Teamwork: A Skill You'll Need (30 mins.)

shows students what it means to be part of a team.

Setting Goals: The Road to Achievement (24 mins.)

provides effective guidelines for setting short- and long-term goals.

Student Workshop: Job Interview Skills (30 mins.)

demonstrates techniques and strategies that contribute to a successful job interview, offers role-play practice.

Get A Goal! Get A Life! (27 mins.)

designed for minority and urban students, presents a goal-setting process for strategizing a plan of action.

Join My Team! A Career Education Game teaches students important concepts about working in teams and other group situations.

You're the Boss: High School boardgame that helps students learn firsthand what it takes to run a retail business.

You're Hired! boardgame that helps students discover for themselves the criteria employers use to decide who gets hired for a job.

SCRIPT

JAMES:

Would you look at this list. They're the fastest-growing, best-paying jobs for the next ten years.

JESSICA:

Look at all these jobs...and we're supposed to decide!

AMY:

Like it's not one of the most important decisions we'll ever make.

STUDENTS:

Ms. Olmyer, help us!

Ms. OLMYER:

Now, what seems to be the problem?

JAMES:

Ms. Olmyer, look at this list!

LANA:

How are we supposed to know what we want to do when we haven't done it?

JESSICA:

Or what we'd like? Or be good at?

AMY:

Are they telling us we have to make up our minds right now?

Ms. OLMYER:

Well yes! Right now! I'm kidding, I'm kidding!
Now take a deep breath and repeat after me,
"Picking a career is a process."

STUDENTS:

Picking a career is a process.

Ms. OLMYER:

In fact, it's a lifetime process. Because, believe it or not, people change careers an average of six times in a lifetime.

STUDENTS:

Really? No kidding. I didn't know that.

Ms. OLMYER:

That's why it pays to know how to do it. So, follow me.

TITLE: Exploring Careers: What's Right for You?

JAMES:

So, what did you mean when you said choosing a career is a process?

Ms. OLMYER:

I mean that there are steps you can take to help you choose a career that you'll not only enjoy, but that you'll be successful at. But, you can't leave it to chance. Most people spend more time researching a major purchase—a car, a computer, a stereo—than they do career choices.

LANA:

Okay, what are the steps?

Ms. OLMYER:

Before we get to the steps, we have to get on the right staircase.

JESSICA:

The right staircase? What's that?

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Ms. OLMYER:

First, let me tell you what the wrong staircase is. You're on the wrong staircase if you choose a career based solely on how much money you think you'll make, or on your parents expectations, or because you want to be with your friends.

AMY:

Yeah, but money's pretty important.

ADAM:

And it's not like our parents don't know us....

Ms. OLMYER:

Yes, those are factors, but not the primary, motivating forces.

JAMES:

So, what is?

Ms. OLMYER:

Ever notice how some people really like what they do—enjoy going to work—and others who just dread going to work?

JESSICA:

Yeah...so?

Ms. OLMYER:

Well, you'll usually find that the people who enjoy their work and are successful are doing something that matches their personality—work that draws on the strengths of their personality. So the right “staircase”—the first part of the career finding process—is the one that helps you know yourself, helps you identify your personality type. And that's where the process begins.

STUDENTS:

Okay.

Part 1: Personality Type

MS. OLMYER:

This is the Holland Hexagon. It was developed by a psychologist named John Holland as a way of identifying personality types. It takes a lot of information and boils it down into this simple six-sided symbol. Holland's idea was that each personality has its own interests and abilities and way of looking at things...and certain careers tend to fit into each of these personality types.

JESSICA:

So if you know what personality type you are, you can look for a career that matches it.

MS. OLMYER:

Right.

JAMES:

This is pretty obvious. Like if you're a Helper you'd probably be a good kindergarten teacher.

MS. OLMYER:

Probably.

JESSICA:

Yeah, but suppose you're a Helper, but you don't want to be a kindergarten teacher. What then?

MS. OLMYER:

You're jumping way ahead. The first thing we need to do is describe each personality type and then have you answer a few questions about yourself. That way, each of you will have an idea where you fit in. Lana, hand out these answer sheets. Okay, let's start with the Doer. Here's Joyce.

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JOYCE:

I don't believe this! It's broken.....And two days before the race! I don't want to take it to the repair shop. It'll be fun to try and fix it myself. Besides who wants to pay those ridiculous prices!

ANN:

You're not ready yet? Come on, we're going to be late.

JOYCE:

Late? Oh, the movies. Sorry, I've got to pass.

ANN:

Pass? Why?

JOYCE:

Cause, my bike's busted and I've got to get it ready for the race.

ANN:

So, work on it tomorrow. What's the big deal?

JOYCE:

Maybe it's no big deal to you.....To *me* it's a very big deal.

ANN:

But everyone's going to the movies.

JOYCE:

So you don't need me.

ANN:

I don't see why you can't stop working and have a little fun.

JOYCE:

See that's what you don't get. To me this *is* fun. You know..... different stokes.

MS. OLMYER:

So what have we learned about Joyce, the Doer? She's athletic, she likes working with her hands—look at those tools; independent, she knows what she wants and isn't overly concerned about what other people think.

Are you a Doer? See how you answer these questions. Are you someone who:

1. enjoys working with your hands?
2. is mechanically inclined and good at fixing things?
3. is athletic?
4. prefers concrete problems, not abstract ones?
5. likes working outdoors?

Okay...now let's look at Lou, a Thinker.

LOU:

This fish tank definitely needs some improvement. I've got to find something really exotic... something no one else has.

MS. OLMYER:

Lou is curious—he keeps searching until he finds what he's after. Critical—he won't accept just anything; and intellectual. Other personality types might not be willing to put in the time or know how to do the research.

LOU:

Ah, that's IT! Now, what do they eat?

MS. OLMYER:

Are you a Thinker? See how you answer these questions. Are you someone who:

1. likes math and science?
2. prefers to work alone?
3. can easily get wrapped up in a project?

4. is confident about your intellectual abilities?
5. enjoy finding solutions to complicated problems?

Okay, Meg. Her personality type is Creator.

MAX:

Meg, I know you're in the school play, but could you also help make the poster?

MEG:

Well, rehearsal starts in few minutes...but yeah, why not.

MAX:

I didn't mean right now.

MEG:

It's not a big deal.

MAX:

You don't have to destroy that!

MEG:

It's okay. It's from last week's pep rally. We're just recycling. Let's see, we need a picture of a great looking guy. Here, I have some magazines to look through.

MAX:

You're going to be late—sorry.

MEG:

It'll be okay, don't worry.

MS. OLMYER:

Okay, so what do we know about Meg? Her clothes tell us she's an original, not a conformist. Her actions show an ability to change direction, not get bogged down on one thing at a time. She's willing to break rules—do things her own way.

So answer these questions to see if you're a Creator. Are you someone who:

1. enjoys art, music, drama?
2. prefers free, unstructured work environments?
3. finds it hard to stick to a routine?
4. usually does things your own way?
5. is willing to take a risk and try something new?

Now for Stan, the Helper.

STAN:

Hey, you look miserable, what's eating you?

LOU:

Do me a favor.....don't mention eating. I feel sick.

STAN:

Man, we've got to do something about the cafeteria food.

LOU:

Nah, it's not the food, it's...

STAN:

Not Cindy again?

LOU:

Yeah.

STAN:

I'm sorry to hear it, man, what happened this time?

LOU:

She said she'd go to the dance on Friday...

STAN:

She backed out?

LOU:

I guess that's that.

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STAN:

Look, you should go to the dance anyway, for your own head. Let me think...what if Kelly asks Tanya to go with us?

LOU:

I don't know.

STAN:

Whatever, we'll all go together. It'll be a fun time. Come on, let's play some handball before the bell.

Ms. OLMYER:

Here's what makes Stan a Helper. Obviously, he's a good friend. He tries to understand how Lou feels and give him a helping hand. Another personality type might not pick up on a friend's misery, let alone try and solve his problem. And, Stan's not only willing to give suggestions, he's prepared to listen, too.

Are you a Helper? See how you answer these questions. Are you someone who:

1. is sensitive to the needs of others?
2. likes to help people solve their personal problems?
3. enjoys teaching and tutoring others?
4. doesn't like working with machines and tools?
5. enjoys working in groups.

How are you doing so far?

JAMES:

It's hard to say. I have yeses in more than one personality type. What does that mean, I'm a split personality?

Ms. OLMYER:

Of course not. No one's just one personality type.

We're all a mix of types, but one is usually dominant. Another one comes in second, and another one is third. To get a complete picture of yourself, you need to have all three.

So now, let's continue. Here's a Persuader. It's Ann....remember we met her before.

ANN:

Listen, I have this great idea for the Halloween Dance...a bunch of us go as a box of crayons. We'll all be dressed the same but in different colors. It's real cool...and the costumes are easy to make. I saw it in a magazine.

JOYCE:

You know how I hate to dress up.

ANN:

Oh come on, it'll be fun. And don't forget there's a prize.

JOYCE:

Who else is going to do it?

ANN:

No one yet....I'm going to ask Jeffrey and Bethany and Liz...and maybe Colin.

JOYCE:

Colin? You think you can talk him into this? Never.

ANN:

Let me worry about that. I figure we'll enter in the group category. There's no way we won't win first prize, which by the way includes not only cash, but an interview with that crazy deejay from WLYZ!

JOYCE:

The loony one with the long hair.....I love him!

Ms. OLMYER:

So, what do we know about Ann? She's outgoing, self-confident, competitive, and talkative. Another personality type might not care about winning the contest, or if they did, certainly wouldn't take the lead in putting a team together.

Are you a Persuader? See how you answer these questions. Are you someone who:

1. tries to convince people to see things your way?
2. takes a leadership position?
3. enjoys making things happen?
4. likes competition?
5. is good at organizing activities for people?

Now for Max, the Organizer.

MEG:

Max, I can't believe your locker. It must take you hours to keep it that neat.

MAX:

Not really. In fact, it saves me time. I don't have to hunt around for my things like you guys. I know where everything is. Look it doesn't take any longer to put my math book here instead of there.

MEG:

Don't you ever get the urge to mess up just a little? Put something in the wrong place? Just once?

MAX:

Why would I want to do that?

MEG:

I'm kidding.

MAX:

Oh, very funny. There's a reason why they elected me student council treasurer, you know. Everyone knows I can do the job—right!

MS. OLMYER:

Max, the Organizer. He's orderly, methodical, and dependable. If he says he'll do something, he'll do it. He was asked to handle the finances because Max will sweat the details that would drive another personality type crazy.

Are you an Organizer? See how you answer these questions. Are you someone who:

1. prefers a well-ordered environment?
2. likes working with numbers and records?
3. is most comfortable with steady routines?
4. is careful, orderly, and calm?
5. is good at analyzing information?

So, where do you think you fit in? Let's look at your answer sheets. Adam, what would you say your basic personality type is?

ADAM:

Persuader—all the way.

JESSICA:

Me, I'm an Organizer.

AMY:

A Doer.

LANA:

I'd say a Thinker.

MS. OLMYER:

James?

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JAMES:

Hard to say.....but if I had to pick one, it'd be Creator.

Ms. OLMYER:

Steve, how about you?

STEVE:

A Helper. Definitely a Helper.

JESSICA:

Great. But what does this have to do with choosing a career?

LANA:

And finding a job?

Part 2: Career Choices

Ms. OLMYER:

Life is changing so fast, it makes predicting careers for the 21st century a risky business. But we can take what we do know, and make some reasonable predictions.

Here's one. We know that people are living longer, so any career dealing with aging—like home health care assistants, physical therapists, physicians, physicians assistants—will be a good bet.

There will also be more retired people who'll want leisure activities. So the hospitality industries—travel, hotels, restaurants—would be other areas where the potential for jobs should be good. The same for entertainment and recreation services.

And with people changing jobs so often the need for education and training at all ages will be in demand. Teachers of all kinds will be needed.

The same goes for any career that has to do with computers—computer scientists, computer programmers, computer technicians.

But remember, your career search should be focused on the kind of work that you'll enjoy and that you'll be good at. So that means finding a career that fits your personality type. Let's see how it all fits together.

We'll start with Doers, the personality types who enjoy working with their hands.

MECHANIC:

I'm a mechanic. My work involves servicing heating, air conditioning, and refrigeration units. Some jobs are big—like at a store or business; some small—like at someone's home. It's always different, always challenging. Never the same exact problem twice.

Why do I like what I do? Well first of all, I like fixing things. I was always the kid who liked taking a toy apart and putting it back together again, rather than just playing with it.

Well this is almost the same. You get a job—you have to figure out what's wrong; how you can fix it; the parts; the time. Always a problem and it's up to me to find a solution.

Another thing is, you have some freedom—you're not stuck in one place, you travel around a lot. And you can adjust your hours, because someone always has to be on call. You know, if a refrigeration unit in a supermarket goes out, you can't say "call back during regular business hours." So you can work a schedule that fits your life.

What do you need to get into this line of work? Well, I took some vocational courses in high school, but most of my training came on-the-job. What you really need is a good, well-rounded education.

Math—not only for the repairs, but to figure out billing and taxes. Reading—a lot of complicated manuals. Science, especially chemistry because these systems use a lot of chemicals. And of course, you have to be able to talk to customers: explain what the problem is; what it'll take to fix it; whether it's even worth fixing.

Ms. OLMYER:

Does work like that sound interesting, Amy? You're a Doer.

AMY:

Yeah, I'm a Doer. I mean I like working with my hands and I don't want to be stuck behind a desk, but chemistry! And those repair manuals! Forget it. What else is there?

ADAM:

There are plenty of other Doer jobs where you don't have to know science. Look, hairdressers, carpenters, air traffic controller, caterers, chefs.

JAMES:

You know what I don't get? In some ways a mechanic and a chef are a lot alike—both use their hands, they're not stuck behind a desk—but in other ways they're so different. How can they both be Doers?

Ms. OLMYER:

Well, Doer is their dominant personality. Remember when you took your quizzes yesterday, you found out that you have one dominant personality type, right? Like Amy, she's a Doer. But

you also found out you have traits of other personality types as well. That's your secondary type.

Well, our mechanic friend likes math and science. I would guess his secondary personality type is probably Thinker. And Amy loves to make things...food in her case. I bet Creator is your secondary type.

AMY:
You're right.

MS. OLMYER:
So in exploring career opportunities, you have to take into consideration not just your dominate personality type but your other types—and concentrate on work that draws on all your strengths. Now you've got it! So let's get back to the Hexagon. We're up to the Thinker—someone who's analytical and logical and enjoys math and science. That's you, right Lana?

LANA:
Yup. What's a computer programmer?

MS. OLMYER:
Let's take a look.

COMPUTER PROGRAMMER:
There isn't a business that uses computers that doesn't require the services of a computer programmer. I'm the person who sees to it that the computer does what you expect it to do. Like here at the head offices at this department store. I helped set up the system that tracks inventory and sales.

For the most part, programming is problem solving. First you have to understand the problem—

what the system needs to be able to do. Then you have to work out a program to meet those needs.

When something goes wrong, you have to find out what caused the problem and figure out how to correct it. Doing that can take minutes, or hours, or even weeks depending on the size of the problem. The most difficult problems are usually the most fun.

Educational requirements for programmers vary, from vocational school to community college to four-year college. However, more and more employers are looking for people with a four-year degree and some may require a graduate degree. The job outlook is very good, especially for those with more training.

LANA:

Graduate school? I don't know about that. I'm going to have enough trouble paying for college.

MS. OLMYER:

You don't need a graduate degree to get a job, but if you should decide to go to graduate school there are many possibilities.

You can work during the day and go to school at night. Or you can work for a while and then go back to school full time. There are always options. That doesn't only apply to jobs for Thinkers, it applies to everyone and every career.

LANA:

Let's see some more.

STEVE:

Looks like you need college for all of these.

AMY:

Here's one I know you don't need a college degree for—radiologic technologist. That's what my cousin does.

JESSICA:

What's that?

AMY:

You work with high-tech equipment like MRI's and ultrasound and X-rays. My cousin took a two-year course at a hospital. She needed lots of math and science, but she loves that stuff....and she's good at it.

MS. OLMYER:

And she likes her job?

AMY:

Oh yeah..

MS. OLMYER:

That's a perfect example of someone finding a career that matches their personality and their abilities. Now, let's take a look at a Creator—an imaginative, artistic personality, who doesn't like routines, and isn't afraid to tackle something new.

GRAPHIC DESIGNER:

I'm a graphic designer. I work for a company that designs magazines, posters, and CD covers. Computer graphics are really exciting. There's always something new—new programs, new possibilities. I take elements like text, photographs, and illustration and make them work together on a page. The idea is to lead the reader's eye to the right place, so the message comes across.

It's not surprising I got into this work. It's always been easier for me to express myself with

pictures than with words. I mean I was never in the school play. I was the one who worked on the sets or designed the flyers.

What I like best about this job is that I get to *use* my creativity. I'm not in some kind of rut, where I always do the same thing, the same way. Here, I get a project—of course I have to stick to the deadline and budget—but then it's up to me to come up with something.

Naturally, I think all my work is terrific, but sometimes the powers that be don't see it that way, so I have to be able to handle criticism. That can be hard, but I've learned not to take comments personally.

You can get into graphic design with an associates degree. And of course, computer training is a must. But after that, it's mainly learning on-the-job. The good news? The prospects of finding a job as a graphics designer or graphic artist are pretty good.

Ms. OLMYER:

How about that James?

JAMES:

Can I see what else there is for Creator?
Actor, photographer, bookstore owner, multimedia designer, electronic publishing writer, interior decorator, art teacher. It's so hard to know.

Ms. OLMYER:

We know Creator is your dominant personality type. What's your secondary type?

JAMES:

Persuader.

MS. OLMYER:

Persuader—someone who likes organizing people and making things happen....I know! A video production manager. You need to be creative, but you certainly need those persuader traits. Let's take a look.

VIDEO PRODUCTION MANAGER:

We're making a video here and I'm the production manager. What that means is that I'm responsible for....basically, everything. From casting, wardrobe, permits, makeup, and feeding the cast and crew. Like I said, everything.

I have to make a lot of creative decisions too...like props, costumes and locations. Locations...that's a perfect example of why this is a good job for someone who's both a Creator and a Persuader. Let's say I need a location...well I have to consider how it'll look when we're shooting. How it will adapt to the camera—if it's really what we want. That's the Creator part. Then I have to convince the owner to let us use it—bring in all these people and equipment. That takes a Persuader's traits, believe me.

STEVE:

How about the Helper?

MS. OLMYER:

Okay, let's get to that...Careers for Helpers. That's the personality type that likes to work with people. Lucky you. A lot of jobs that appeal to Helpers are on the list of fastest growing careers. Remember what I said before, that the population is getting older. And that means any career dealing with aging will be in demand.

STEVE:

Like home health aides and physical therapists, isn't that what you said?

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Ms. OLMYER:

Right. And for people who are just entering the job market, those are careers you can get a start in with training from a community college or vocational school.

ADAM:

I thought a physical therapist needed a bachelor's degree or even more.

Ms. OLMYER:

That's true...but you can have a good career as a physical therapist assistant, and if you decide to move up, you'll be in a good position to become a full-fledged physical therapist.

STEVE:

I think I'd like some kind of health care career, but I don't see myself as a nurse or anything like that. You know what sounded interesting? What Amy was talking about before, what her cousin does a.....what did you call it?

AMY:

Radiologic technologist.

Ms. OLMYER:

Was your secondary type Thinker?

STEVE:

Actually I was almost equal between Helper and Thinker.

Ms. OLMYER:

That sometimes happens. What was third?

STEVE:

Third was Doer.

Ms. OLMYER:

I'm not surprised. A radiologic technologist

would probably be a Helper and a Thinker and a Doer.

STEVE:

Well, I guess that's why that sounded good, except for the two-year training program. I can't do that. I've got to get a job right out of school.

MS. OLMYER:

Then I have something that you might really like....an Emergency Medical Technician or Paramedic.

EMS WORKER:

This is a great job for the right person, but you have to be pretty strong. Not only physically, mentally too. You see some gory stuff and you see people at their worst. People who've been in accidents, or beaten up or battered. It's tough, but it's also a really rewarding job. You're there at the most critical moment. You know you're making a real difference. Sometimes whether the person lives or dies depends on you.

This is a job for a people person, because you have to be able to give emotional support, and play a lot of different roles depending on the situation: clinician, clergy, social worker. And you have to deal with so many people: the person who called the ambulance, the patient, and the staff at the hospital. So it's important for you to be able to listen—and make yourself understood.

The requirements to become an EMS Technician vary from place to place. But basically you need a 120-hour training course and a 10-hour internship at a hospital. Then you have to pass exams. It helps to have a good background in science and math, and of course, good communication skills. That's on the academic side. On the per-

sonal side, you need to be someone who can work as part of a team and you definitely have to be able to take the constant stress.

JAMES:

What about Helper jobs that don't involve health care? Can we see some of those?

Ms. OLMYER:

Sure. Day care workers, social worker, retirement counselor, leisure activities director, health and wellness counselor. How about my job? Career counselor and teacher. Those are all jobs that Helpers would enjoy doing.

LANA:

They all seem so different.

Ms. OLMYER:

Okay! So let's move on to the Persuader—the personality type that likes competition, making things happen and dealing with the public. Let's look at a career in the hospitality industry.

ASSISTANT MANAGER:

Right now, I'm an assistant manager at this hotel, working in the front office. That's where all the action is. I deal directly with the guests, with the everyday routines. The manager handles the really big problems, but he's never out front like I am.

My office is where all the special requests or complaints come. A guest may want to check in before the 3 PM check-in time, so I contact housekeeping and see if we have a room ready. Or, someone can't sleep because the person in the next room is having a party. I try to solve the problem or move the guest to another room. Let me tell you, it helps to know mediation and conflict resolution skills.

At night, there are banquets and parties. That's when it gets really crazy. It's my job to see that everything's ready—the food, the staff, the decorations. I can get in trouble if something goes wrong, even if I'm not responsible. But, that's part of the job.

If there's anything I can do to make a guest leave the hotel feeling that they had a good experience, I'm proud. I said this is where the complaints come, well so do the compliments and that's very nice.

Another interesting thing about working in a hotel is that the guests comes from all over the world. So it helps to know geography. It's a real asset if you speak more than one language. I speak English, French and Spanish and I use them all practically every day.

This is a career that you can approach in a few different ways. Top of the line is a degree in hotel or restaurant management from a four-year college. You can also find programs at a vocational school or community college. Of course, it'll probably take you longer to work your way up. But this is a field where experience really counts, especially in the restaurant area. Many top restaurant people started out as waiters.

JAMES:

Let's check out what else there is for a Persuader.

ADAM:

Retail store manager or owner, public relations representative, real estate broker, fund raiser,

MS. OLMYER:

And, of course, sales representative. That's one

area where it's predicted there'll be a very big growth in jobs.

AMY:

I guess a sales rep really has to be a strong Persuader type. I mean imagine some one who isn't a people person doing that. Disaster.

LANA:

Yeah, I can just picture me knocking on doors—trying to sell something. I'd hate it.

MS. OLMYER:

And if you hated it, you probably wouldn't be very good at it.

JESSICA:

So, how about the Organizer. Me!

MS. OLMYER:

Okay...Organizers: people who like to work with details, in orderly, structured environments. No flying by the seat of your pants for an Organizer.

MEDICAL RECORDS TECHNICIAN:

I like to call our department Central Control, because without us this hospital couldn't function. It's our job to coordinate all the hospital's records. What that means is that the paperwork from every other department comes to us and we consolidate it, so that we have a complete, accurate, and detailed record of every, single patient.

We coordinate the patient's medical history, the operating reports, pathology reports, radiology reports, progress reports...everything.

Those records aren't only necessary for patient care, they're also essential for insurance payments

and for any legal questions that might come up. A lost or misplaced file can have very serious consequences.

To perform this job you have to understand medical terminology and read the records accurately and quickly. You have to make sure all the proper documents are attached, and that they're signed by the doctor. Without that signature, no record is legal and official. You have to act as a proof-reader, executor, classifier, filer and detective all at the same time.

This is a job that requires the ability to concentrate, pay attention to detail, and keep a hundred balls in the air without losing your cool. The doctors need records, the insurance companies need records, the emergency room needs records, the patients want information, the lawyers want information, phones are ringing.

Usually, you need a two-year associates degree or accreditation from an Independent Study Programs in Medical Record Technology, but Hospitals occasionally promote promising medical record clerks with 2-4 years experience. And of course, you need good computer skills.

STEVE:

So this is a health-related career for someone who isn't a Helper type?

MS. OLMYER:

That's right. And it's a career where there will be jobs. It's not just hospitals that need records technicians—nursing homes, home health agencies, large medical practices all need people who can do this work.

AMY:

You know what's interesting? I always thought that when you were looking for a career you should start with the field you wanted to be in—like communication or teaching or health care—not the particular work you'd be doing.

MS. OLMYER:

Well the field is important. But your primary concern should be the work you'll be performing in that field. Because when you work at a job that suits your personality, you'll increase your odds of pursuing a career that you'll enjoy—and be successful at.

So here are the steps to take when you start thinking about a career. First, find out as much as you can about you. That means determining your first, second, and third personality types.

Second, see which career fields and jobs are most suited to your personality type.

And third, find out what it takes to get there. Vocational school, two-year college, four-year college, on-the-job training. Then make it happen for you.

Come on, let's get started!

THE END