

## Career starter activities

These quick and easy ideas can be used in any classroom to introduce career-related topics. They can be used as stimulus activities at various times in a lesson.

The Kiwi Cards activity guide is another source of career activity ideas. This can also be downloaded from the Careers New Zealand website, [www.careers.govt.nz](http://www.careers.govt.nz).

---

## Table of contents

### Year 7 and up

Jobs by alphabet .....	2
Job webs .....	3
Twenty questions .....	4
Career worm.....	5
Self image.....	6
Hang on to your dreams.....	7
Scavenger hunt.....	9

### Year 9 and up

Choose a teammate.....	11
What's my line .....	13

### Year 11 and up

Pathways-a-plenty.....	15
------------------------	----

# Jobs by alphabet

The purpose of this activity is to share and extend students' knowledge of jobs by brainstorming job names that begin with a certain letter.

---

Structure: pairs or small groups

Duration: 10 minutes, or longer if you have more rounds

Resources: lists of job names to research from (optional).

## Instructions

1. Divide the class into groups. Ask them to choose a writer.
2. Choose a letter of the alphabet and specify a length of time for the round.
3. Ask the groups to write down all the jobs they can think of which begin with that letter.
4. When time is up, the group with the most jobs reads out their list. Any entry can be challenged by other groups.

## Variations

- Instead of jobs, play the game to elicit skills or personal qualities.
- Get students to compile lists of job names as a short homework task and allow them to use these in the game.

## Extensions

- Reward spelling, creativity and originality.
- Have 'secret square jobs' that attract a reward if they come up on a group's list.

## Key competencies

- Participating and contributing

## Career management competencies

- Locate information and use it effectively

## Job webs

The purpose of this activity is to show how jobs can connect up. Students should start to see that people may be able to move between these jobs.

---

- Structure: small groups
- Duration: 20 minutes for each round
- Resources: large sheets of paper and pens  
a prepared example showing students what you want them to do (optional)

### Instructions

1. Write a job on the board. This should be a job that has links to several other jobs.
2. Tell students they are going to think of all jobs they can that would have some kind of dealings with this job.
3. [Optional] Show a prepared example and talk through it making these points:
  - a. jobs connect to each other
  - b. jobs may use similar sets of knowledge and skills
  - c. people may move from one job to another in their careers.
4. Groups do the activity and then share their results.

### Variations

- Do the same thing using a keyword such as 'animals' or 'cars'. Students write down all the jobs that are linked in some way with the keyword and draw a diagram showing how they connect.

### Key competencies

- Thinking

### Career management competencies

- Participate in lifelong learning to support life and work goals

# Twenty questions

The purpose of this activity is to help students learn more about jobs. In this activity students ask each other questions to find out what they need to know.

---

- Structure: whole-class activity
- Duration: each round may last 5–10 minutes
- Resources: none for the standard game. For the variations:  
sticky labels  
access to the Career Services website or a copy of Jobs Galore

## Instructions

This is played the same way as any game of Twenty Questions.

1. Start with one person thinking of a job.
2. Students ask questions that require a 'yes/no' answer, to help them guess the job.
3. The person who first guesses the job is the winner and thinks of a job for the next round.

## Variations

### Research

- Have the class research a number of jobs beforehand, using the Careers New Zealand website, printouts of job information from the website or a recent copy of Jobs Galore. Let them refer to the printout while answering questions.
- You may want to prepare a list of jobs and allocate one to each student, or to some students.

### Who am I?

- Put a sticky label with a job written on it on each student's back. Don't let them see it.
- Students mingle with each other. They can ask anyone questions to help them work out what their job is. The questions can only have 'yes/no' answers.
- This continues until everyone has worked out what their job is.
- You could ask students to sit down as soon as they have worked out their own job.

## Key competencies

- Using language, symbols and texts

## Career management competencies

- Locate information and use it effectively

## Career worm

The purpose of this activity is to share students' knowledge of jobs they know about. In this activity students try to match the last and first letters of consecutive job names.

---

- Structure: small groups
- Duration: as long as you want, or for as long as the class enjoys it
- Resources: large pieces of paper and pens, especially if you want to display the results  
alphabet flashcards (optional)  
list of job names (optional). Note: a lot of job names end in 'r' so include plenty of jobs that start with 'r' in your list.

### Instructions

1. Divide students into groups.
2. Pick a letter of the alphabet. You could give all groups the same letter or each group a different letter.
3. Explain that the groups need to think of a job that starts with the letter they have and write that down. When they have done that, they need to think of a job that starts with the last letter of their first job, and so on. Give them a time limit.
4. You can give some or all groups the list of job names if they are finding it hard to come up with names themselves.
5. Declare the longest worm the winner, or the best looking, or reward all results. Positively reward all students for effort, no matter how long their worms.

### Variations

- Make a class worm by joining all the worms together. Students may need to think of an extra job or jobs to join their worm to the start of the next group's.
- Use another long animal (eg, snake, eel).

### Key competencies

- Participating and contributing

### Career management competencies

- Interact positively and effectively with others

# Self image

The purpose of this activity is to help students learn to describe the characteristics of others and identify their own.

---

Structure: divide the class into groups of 5 or 6

Resources: paper big enough to write a word or two on – at least 10 pieces per student  
a list of descriptive words students can select from if you feel some will not be able to think of their own.

## Instructions

1. Ask each student to write two words or short phrases that best describe each of the other people in their group. Use a separate piece of paper for each description.
2. Descriptions must be positive only. Absolutely no put-downs.
3. Put all the pieces of paper in the middle of the group. Ask each person to look through them and find three descriptions that they think fit them best.
4. Each person reads out the descriptions they chose and explains why they chose them.
5. Allow time for students to record these descriptions as part of their personal profile.

## Variations

- Each student reads out the descriptions they wrote about the other students and explains why they wrote them.

## Key competencies

- Managing self
- Relating to others

## Career management competencies

- Build and maintain a positive self-concept
- Interact positively and effectively with others

# Hang on to your dreams

The purpose of this activity is to help students make connections between what they enjoy doing or studying and the world of work.

---

Year group: Year 7 and up

Duration: 50–60 minutes. This may be spread over different days

Resources:

- copies of the worksheet overleaf for each student (optional)
- A4 coloured paper or card, scissors, glue, string and a hole punch
- wire coat hangers, one for each student
- lists of skill terms
- access to Jobs by Interest brochures or the Jobs by Interest online tool on the Careers New Zealand website, [www.careers.govt.nz](http://www.careers.govt.nz)

Instructions

1. Tell students that they will be making mobiles to display the links between what they enjoy doing (or studying) and the world of work.
2. Explain the links between interests and subjects, skills and job areas. Note this activity asks students to identify job interest areas, not actual jobs. It just gets them thinking about job areas and the relationship between the world of work and what they enjoy doing and learning.
3. Get students to make their choices for the first line of boxes on the worksheet. Students are likely to need help before they go onto the next step, which is to identify the skills they are learning in the activities or subjects they have chosen.
4. Work with the class on identifying the skills in two of the students' choices before asking students to complete the second line of boxes on their worksheets. A list of skill terms is useful. Check students' understanding of the skill terms as you go.
5. To complete the third line on the worksheet, students will need access to the Careers New Zealand website or Jobs by Interest brochures. Draw students' attention to the interest areas – there are 14 interest areas in Jobs by Interest. They can look at the jobs in those areas but should choose interest areas rather than jobs to create their mobiles.
6. Once students have completed their worksheets they create their mobiles, hang these and move around to look at each other's mobiles.

Key competencies

- Thinking

Career management competencies

- Participate in lifelong learning to support life and work goals

## Hang on to your dreams

1. Pick three activities or subjects you enjoy and write them in the first row of the table below.
2. Think about the skills you are learning in each activity or subject, eg, researching. Write these skills in the cell underneath the activity or subject.
3. Use Jobs by Interest to choose up to three interest areas that you are interested in. Write each interest area in the cell underneath the activity/subject and skills that you think fit best with it.
4. Paste your table on coloured paper or card and cut into separate cells.
5. Use a hole punch and string to display your creation on a coat hanger.

Activity or subject I enjoy	Activity or subject I enjoy	Activity or subject I enjoy
Skills I am learning	Skills I am learning	Skills I am learning
Possible job interest area(s)	Possible job interest area(s)	Possible job interest area(s)



## Scavenger hunt

The purpose of this activity is to introduce students to the idea of networking. In this activity they ask around to find someone who matches the descriptions they are given.

---

Year group: Year 7 and up

Duration: variable, depending on how much time you have

Resources: scavenger hunt sheet for each student, or written on board

### Instructions

1. Write the list of things to look for on the board or hand out scavenger hunt sheets to students.
2. Tell students to work through the list and record their answers.
3. You might want to get different students to start with different items on the list.
4. You might also want to work out the answers to any hard questions as a group.

### Variations

- Create a different set of things to look for based on your knowledge of the class.
- Have the students create lists.
- Do the whole thing as a seated cooperative activity rather than students actually walking around talking to each other.

### Key competencies

- Participating and contributing

### Career management competencies

- Interact positively and effectively with others

# Scavenger hunt

Find someone for each item below and record their name in the box

Has the same zodiac sign as you	Was born in the South Island
Same favourite subject	Likes the same band or TV show as you
Same hobby as you	Comes to school the same way you do
Has as many siblings as you do	Wants to work with animals when leaves school
Has a family member in a job to do with health	Knows someone who works in the IT industry

## Choose a teammate

The purpose of this activity is to help students to realise that skills and personal qualities are important when working in teams. Students may need to first explore the difference between a personal quality and a skill.

---

Structure: small groups of 5–7

Duration: 60 minutes

Resources: copy of worksheet for each group

### Instructions

1. You may need to first discuss the differences between a personal quality and a skill.
2. Get students to form groups.
3. Distribute the worksheets, explain the task and set a time limit for it.
4. Emphasise that the students will need to cooperate to agree on the skills and personal qualities required.
5. This activity can generate discussion on what's important for a job. It can also lead to discussion on how groups work together (or not!) to make shared decisions.

### Variations

- After the groups have listed their personal qualities and skills, distribute some prepared descriptions of people that they must choose between.
- Vary the task the team has to do, such as survive on a desert island or organise a birthday party.

### Key competencies

- Participating and contributing

### Career management competencies

- Interact positively and effectively with others
- Make life- and career-enhancing decisions

Adapted from *Games for Social and Life Skills*, Tim Bond, Hutchison, 1985

## Choose a teammate

You are part of a 6 or 7 person team which has the job of planning, organising, fundraising and supervising a week-long class skiing trip to Mt Ruapehu. Your group has to arrange everything – accommodation, cooking, activities, ski lessons, first aid, etc. You need to add one more member to your team. In the space below, write a profile that describes the person you would want. Write this as if they were a real person, that is, give them a name, age, etc.

---

**Name:** ..... **Gender:** male/female

**Age:** under 10    11–20    21–30    31–40    41–50    51+

**Personal qualities** (eg, loyal, determined, funny):

.....  
.....  
.....

**Skills** (eg, good with money, able to cook):

.....  
.....  
.....

Once you have got as clear a picture as possible of this person, write down the most important things that make you want to work with him/her.

---

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

## What's my line

The purpose of this activity is to extend students' knowledge of working conditions for different jobs. Students research specific jobs and use their information in a class quiz.

---

- Structure: pairs, small groups or individuals
- Duration: 15–20 minutes for students to complete the worksheets. 2-3 minutes for each quiz round
- Resources: list of job names for students to research  
access to the Careers New Zealand website or job descriptions printed from the website

### Instructions

1. Before the lesson, make a list of job names to use. If you are going to use printed job descriptions from the Careers New Zealand website, prepare these.
2. Assign each student/group one or more job names and hand out the student worksheet. Explain to students that they are going to find the information to complete the worksheet for the job they have been given.
3. Show students how to access job descriptions on the Careers New Zealand website or hand out the printed job copies. Students could complete the research as a homework task.
4. If you are going to run the quiz in another session, you could collect students' worksheets once they have completed them and return them in the next session.
5. Run as many quiz rounds as you have time for. Explain to students they are going to read out the information they have on their worksheet to the class but keep the job name a secret. The rest of the class is going to try to guess the job.

### Variations

- Students try to guess the job after each section of the worksheet is read out.
- Use different questions.
- Run it as a competition between small groups. You can award points, or not.
- Change the research source, eg, students fill out a worksheet for a job that is or was in their family, or one that is in a TV programme.
- Ask students "What do you like and not like about the job you researched?"

### Key competencies

- Using language, symbols and text

### Career management competencies

- Locate information and use it effectively

Credit: Pat Agnew, Aranui High School, Christchurch

## What's my line?

Find an answer for each of these questions for the job you have been given. Don't show anyone else what you are writing.

1. For this job I wear:
2. At work, the strongest smell is:
3. At work, the most common noise is:
4. The hours I work are:
5. I get paid approximately:
6. The school subjects I need to be good at are:

## Pathways-a-plenty

The purpose of this activity is to help students see that people make many job changes in their lives and how they do this.

---

Structure: individual exercise  
Duration: 15 minutes (presentation time optional)  
Resources: worksheet for each student

### Instructions

1. Hand out the worksheet. Tell students they are going to create a sequence of four jobs. The sequence needs to tell a story of how a fictitious person moves from the first of the jobs to the last through the other two. Students need to say what helped the person make each move, eg, training, promotion, buying a business.
2. Students hand in or present their stories to the class. Ask questions to get more detail if required.
3. Discuss the idea that there can be many changes in a person's career – lifelong learning.

### Variations

- Students are randomly given four jobs.
- Include other life roles as part of the worksheet, eg, parenting, caregiving, running a home, voluntary work.

### Key competencies

- Thinking

### Career management competencies

- Participate in lifelong learning to support life and work goals
- Make life and career-enhancing decisions

Adapted from J.J. and L.D. Kirk, Training Games for Career Development.

## Pathways-a-plenty

Rest Home Manager	Small Business Owner	Scientist
Hotel Manager	Curator	Practice Nurse
Nurse Practitioner	Clothing Designer	Human Resources Manager
Event Manager	Marketing Manager	Computer Systems Analyst
Nursery Manager	Teacher	Graphic Designer
Retail Manager	Sales Representative	District Nurse
Medical Laboratory Technician	Beauty Therapist	Payroll Officer
Sales Representative	Administration Officer	Gardener
Receptionist	Sewing Machinist	Food and Beverage Attendant
Teacher Aide	Retail Salesperson	Laundry Worker