

# Career Exploration

for High School Students

*Pursuing Their Dreams*



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# Career Explorations for High School Students: *Pursuing their Dreams*

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Unless otherwise noted, all Scriptural references contained in this E-Book are taken from the King James Version of the Bible.

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## Introduction

**A**t first Andrew didn't want to take your Career Exploration class, but it turned out to be one of his favorites," the enthusiastic mother told me.

I had just completed a semester-long class for eighth-twelfth graders at our homeschool coop. The 17 teenagers relished studying themselves!

My two semesters of experience teaching Career Exploration were rewarding for both my students and me. I purposely shared with the students my own experiences of searching for a career that uses both my talents and skills but also fits my priorities. I tried to impress on them the joy they will experience when they find God's plan for their future. You, too, can guide your high school student to discover his real self—what the Lord made him to be. Here are some ideas, resources, and curricula that you can use to develop a career exploration plan for your student.

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## Career Exploration Is a Process, Not a Point

**P**rocess is the goal in teaching a Career Exploration class. Express to your students that they may not know specifically what they want to be, but they will gain the tools that will allow them to search and plan better.

My hope was that each student would finish my class with three possible careers they could pursue or at least a general idea of a path to follow. My own life has had several career explorations. During high school, I decided on a college major. In choosing engineering, I considered my skills and abilities, but since I wasn't a Christian, I didn't consider godly priorities, such as family. After I became a Christian and mother, my priorities changed and I had another period of career investigation. I found accounting to be to my liking and very flexible. I retrained, became a CPA, and now work part-time as a self-employed accountant. As a result, my career choice is an excellent fit of career and family for me. So, my personal experiences, mistakes and all, were helpful in teaching my class the process of career exploration.

## The 4-Step Career Exploration Process

In order to explore possibilities for the careers they may be interested in, students work through these four steps:

- Investigate: Discover your personality, abilities, skills, and priorities.
- Match possible careers to your personality.
- Research potential careers to see if there is a fit.
- Prepare a plan to pursue your career choice.

By way of example, my 14-year-old daughter, Emily, learned from the class that she was organized, encouraging, and detail-oriented. Personality tests matched her traits to several careers. She researched about six careers in detail. She rejected some upon learning more about them and ultimately settled on pharmacy, teaching, and accounting. Her plan is to take biology and chemistry classes in the next two years. If Emily likes those subjects, she may pursue pharmacy. If not, she may become an accountant. She also volunteers her time teaching a children's Sunday school class to see if she would enjoy being a teacher.

## Helpful Resources

The most helpful tool for teaching the career exploration process is a curriculum called *Youth Exploration Survey (YES!)*. It is published by Crown Ministries, a Christian nonprofit organization that teaches money management skills and offers career guidance materials. I used the YES! books as the core text in my class. They cover each step of the process. YES! includes several personality and interest surveys. After taking these surveys and choosing matching careers, the student researches possible occupations. He looks for a good fit using a helpful "roadmap" with many decision checkpoints along the way. The last checkpoint is matching a career with a student's priorities. This keeps the student focused on God's will for him. The curriculum is very biblically based. It encourages the students to discover the unique way that God has made them. YES! may be used by an individual or in a group setting.

There are many resources for career exploration both at libraries and online.

The students also had to pick one book from topics that included career exploration, high school planning, college preparation, or study habits. Two books that were very popular were *Do What You Are* and *What Color Is Your Parachute?* In *Do What You Are* the reader takes a personality test and then researches matching

career choices. *Parachute* is a classic career search guide that provides practical advice on looking for a job or changing careers. The students also used some free online personality tests. There are many resources for career exploration both at libraries and online. See the resources listed at the end of this article for a few to get you started.

After picking four to six possible careers, a student should carefully research them. He should investigate the working conditions, skills needed, pay rates, and future outlook for his chosen fields. For conducting research online, the Bureau of Labor Statistics has a valuable site (see Resources).

## Having a Goal

The last step in the career exploration process is creating an education and experience plan to meet the student's goals. Students need to think about what classes and part-time jobs they can pursue today to prepare them for their future. If a student has a goal in sight, her schoolwork and part-time jobs become more meaningful. Information can be found in several homeschooling books on high school planning. I found that *High School: A Home Designed Form + U + La* by Barbara Shelton was very helpful. It covers designing a class and how to record accomplishments and experiences. Your student should also learn what graduation requirements are in your state and also what most colleges expect. All this information is online, and the *College Board* website, [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com), is helpful. Then your student can make a high school plan that is unique to him or her. In my class, David was a student considering engineering. His plan includes a full load of math and science classes. In contrast, Sarah was interested in acting as a career, so she was encouraged to participate in a summer drama camp run by a local Christian high school.

If a student has a goal in sight, her schoolwork and part-time jobs become more meaningful.

## Life Is an Adventure

The career exploration experience may trigger something dynamic for your student. It did in my class. A metamorphosis occurred as the students began to chart a career path with manageable steps to get there. Encourage your high schoolers to consider carefully how they manage their time, what kind of classes they select, and what kind of part-time jobs they have had. Each decision in life can open doors that will lead them on the path to their goals and dreams. Life is an exciting adventure for

teenagers. I was so fortunate to be a part of the process of seeing them grow up. I hope you too will enjoy guiding your students to investigate their personalities, match them with potential careers, research occupations to find a good fit, and then execute a plan to reach their goals.

## Resources for Career Exploration

### Books

- *YES! Youth Exploration Survey* from Crown Ministries, 1-800-722-1976, [www.crown.org/yesresources/](http://www.crown.org/yesresources/)
- *Do What You Are* by Paul Tieger
- *What Color Is Your Parachute?* By Richard Bolles
- *High School: A Home Designed Form + U + La* by Barbara Shelton

### Websites

- [www.humanmetrics.com](http://www.humanmetrics.com) - Personality tests
- [www.careerkey.org](http://www.careerkey.org) - Personality test related to occupations
- [career.missouri.edu](http://career.missouri.edu) - A career interests game
- [stats.bls.gov/oco](http://stats.bls.gov/oco) - Occupational Outlook Handbook online
- [www.collegeboard.com/plan](http://www.collegeboard.com/plan)—College preparation information



*Carol Topp, CPA ([www.HomeschoolCPA.com](http://www.HomeschoolCPA.com)) is the author of Homeschool Co-ops: How to Start Them, Run Them and Not Burn Out. She runs a home-based accounting practice specializing in tax preparation, small and micro business start ups, and nonprofit accounting. Carol has presented numerous workshops on money management, business start up, taxes, budgeting, nonprofit management, and homeschooling to various community, church, and homeschool groups. She has also published several magazine articles in homeschool magazines including The Old Schoolhouse® Magazine. Carol lives in Cincinnati, Ohio, with her husband and homeschooled her two daughters.*

## **Appendix**



# How to Begin Homeschooling

1. **Discuss With Your Spouse:** Educating your child at home is a huge decision and should be one that is made with your spouse. Do not begin unless you are in agreement about this decision. You will need the support of your spouse not only at the beginning, but also throughout the year.
2. **Research the Homeschool Laws Applicable in your Area:** Be fully aware of the legal requirements before you begin and especially before you take a child out of public school. For the U.S., each state's legal requirements can be found on the [www.HomeschoolLegal.com](http://www.HomeschoolLegal.com) website. Internationally, refer to [www.HSLDA.org](http://www.HSLDA.org).
3. **Research Styles of Home Education:** There is no single right way to educate your child at home; however, there are many differing philosophies you may want to consider.
  - **Charlotte Mason:** Based on a method introduced by nineteenth-century educator Charlotte Mason, this approach includes nature studies/journaling, narration, and living books.
  - **Classical:** Based on Dorothy Sayers' *The Lost Tools of Learning*, in which child development is broken up into three "stages" of learning commonly called "the Trivium."
  - **Delight Directed:** This puts the learning in the hands of the child, based on his or her interests. Parents help facilitate this type of learning with appropriate instructional materials.
  - **Eclectic:** A mix of philosophies and curricula to accommodate each child's abilities and interests. Parents choose from any method or style only those components that fit their specific needs.
  - **The Principle Approach:** An approach based on the principles of our Founding Fathers and an emphasis on God's Word as the basis for every subject.
  - **Traditional Textbook:** Normally uses a full-range, packaged, textbook-type curriculum that also may include a scope and sequence, testing, and recordkeeping.
  - **Unit Studies:** All or most core subjects are covered while studying any one topic or unit of study, using a variety of resources and supplemental activities.
  - **Unschooling:** A relaxed setting where learning is directed by the child. Parts of this philosophy are based on research by John Taylor Gatto and John Holt.

- 4. Find Support:** After finding your style of choice (or a mix of more than one choice), you may want to choose a support group that reflects that specific style or just a general homeschool support group in your area. Meeting with other home educators offers encouragement as well as knowledge and assistance with your homeschool questions. Often, organized classes or activities for your children are offered through support groups as well. For information about homeschool support groups in your area, check these listings:

U.S.:

[www.TheHomeschoolMagazine.com/Homeschool\\_Nations/State\\_Listings.php](http://www.TheHomeschoolMagazine.com/Homeschool_Nations/State_Listings.php)  
[www.HomeschoolLegal.com](http://www.HomeschoolLegal.com)

UK:

<http://www.home-service.org/>  
<http://www.heas.org.uk/>

New Zealand:

<http://www.che.org.nz/>  
<http://hef.org.nz/>  
<http://www.ahe.org.nz/>  
<http://www.homeschoolers.wellington.net.nz/>  
<http://community.library.org.nz/cgi-bin/display.pl?id=296>

Guam:

[www.HomeschoolBlogger.com/guam](http://www.HomeschoolBlogger.com/guam)  
<http://www.tumon.com/ghsa>

Australia:

<http://www.hea.asn.au/hea/>

Canada:

[www.shbe.info](http://www.shbe.info)  
[www.machs.mb.ca](http://www.machs.mb.ca)  
[www.aheaonline.com](http://www.aheaonline.com)  
<http://nshea.webcentre.ca/>  
<http://www.eho.org/support/canada.asp>

- 5. Gather Resources:** Some families start with a complete curriculum package, while others start with a notebook and a library card. Choosing your resources depends on your style or method of education and your own interests. If you are financially burdened, there are free homeschooling resources on the web, as well as discounted, used books in abundance.

**You Can Do This!** Parents around the world are taking back their God-given responsibility to educate their children, and you can too. We have developed two downloads to help you get started:

- ✓ **Homeschool With Confidence**
- ✓ **Simple Recipes for Successful Homeschooling**

***Disclaimer: The above information is not intended as legal advice and should not be construed as such. Please check the legal requirements in your area.***



*Deborah Wuehler is the Senior Editor for The Old Schoolhouse<sup>®</sup> Magazine. She resides in Roseville, California, with her husband Richard. They are the parents of eight children: three teenagers, three elementary, a preschooler, and a baby. They have been homeschooling since the birth of their firstborn, who is now graduated from high school. Many of her articles can be found on [www.Crosswalk.com](http://www.Crosswalk.com) and many other homeschooling sites. She is a group leader in her local homeschooling support organization, and she loves digging for buried treasure in the Word, reading, writing, homeschooling, and dark chocolate! Email her at [senioreditor@TheHomeschoolMagazine.com](mailto:senioreditor@TheHomeschoolMagazine.com).*

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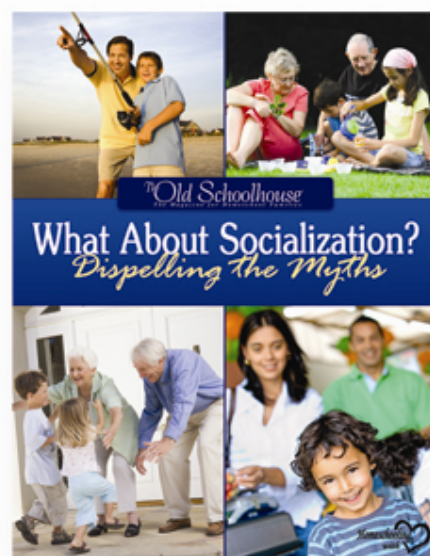
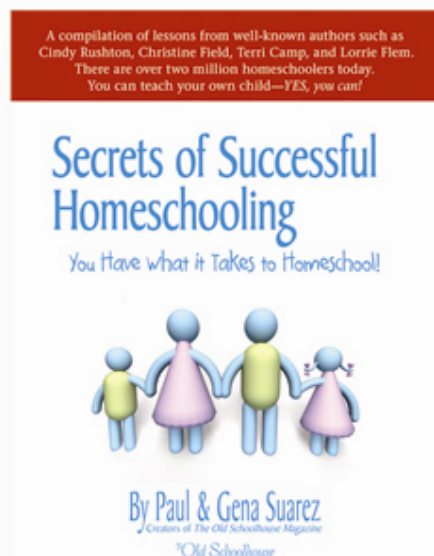
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