

GOALS

- Discuss the job market, how it changes over time, and what you can do to prepare yourself.
- Describe how your education may affect the amount of money that you earn.

KEY TERMS

- job market, p. 2
- skill set, p. 2
- hard skills, p. 2
- soft skills, p. 2
- job description, p. 5
- value, p. 6
- goal, p. 6
- on-the-job training, p. 7
- self-training, p. 7

What Is the Job Market?

job market the job openings that are available when you are ready to go to work

The **job market** refers to the job openings that are available when you are ready to go to work. It is ever changing to meet the needs of employers with job openings.

skill set the unique skills and abilities that you bring to the job market

In today's job market, it will be important for you to have the right skills and be able to learn new ones when they are needed. Change is a vital part of all aspects of life, and the job market is no exception. The unique skills and abilities that you bring to the job market are called your **skill set**. Within your skill set are specific technical abilities, called **hard skills**, which are measurable physical and mental abilities that allow you to complete a job. Examples include:

hard skills measurable physical and mental abilities that allow you to complete a job

technical - can be measured

- installing a faucet
- preparing a spreadsheet
- operating a machine
- driving a vehicle

soft skills nontechnical skills needed by most workers for success on the job

Being able to work well with others is also important. **Soft skills** are nontechnical skills needed by most workers for success on the job. Soft skills are an important part of your skill set. Examples include:

*- nontechnical
- nonmeasurable
- things you develop*

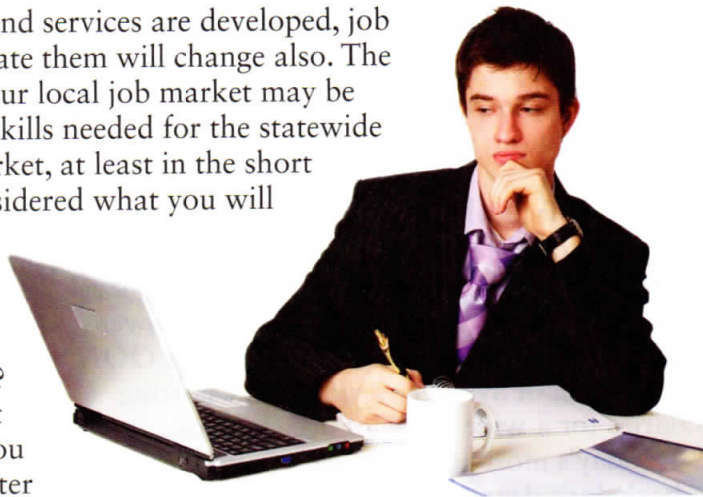
- leadership skills
- effective communication skills
- teamwork skills
- problem-solving skills
- time-management skills



How can you learn soft skills?

Some people have natural soft skills, such as leadership, while others do not. Soft skills can be learned through education and practice. As you pursue the learning of hard skills, you also need to develop soft skills that will help you be successful on the job and in other areas of your life. Having both good hard skills and good soft skills will improve your earnings potential.

As new goods and services are developed, job skills needed to create them will change also. The skills needed for your local job market may be different from the skills needed for the statewide or national job market, at least in the short run. Have you considered what you will need to know and be able to do in order to get a good-paying job in today's job market? As you think about the type of work you would like to do later in life, consider the jobs that may exist in the future.

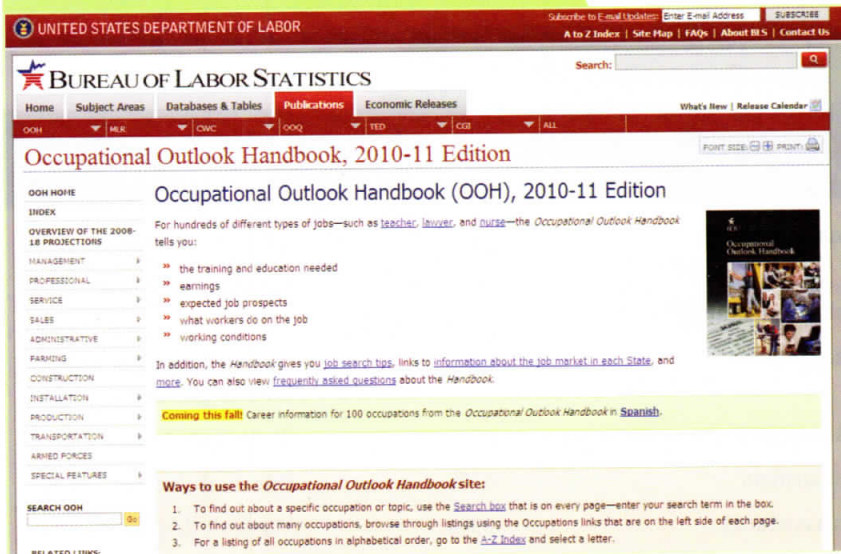


Why is it important to learn about the job market?

Will the type of work you want to do still exist? If so, will this type of work pay well? You might begin asking questions and reading about jobs that sound interesting to you. You can also do online or library research about those careers.

A good place to start job market research is the Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOH). It is published by the U.S. Department of Labor and is available online, as shown in Figure 1-1.1. From this resource, you can learn the latest about jobs in a wide range of fields. The 2010–11 edition provides job projections in 11 career areas that include management, professional, service, sales, administrative, farming, construction, installation, production, transportation, and armed forces careers. Which of these career fields sounds most interesting to you?

Figure 1-1.1 Occupational Outlook Handbook Web Page



Source: United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, 2010–11 Edition, <http://www.bls.gov/OCO>.

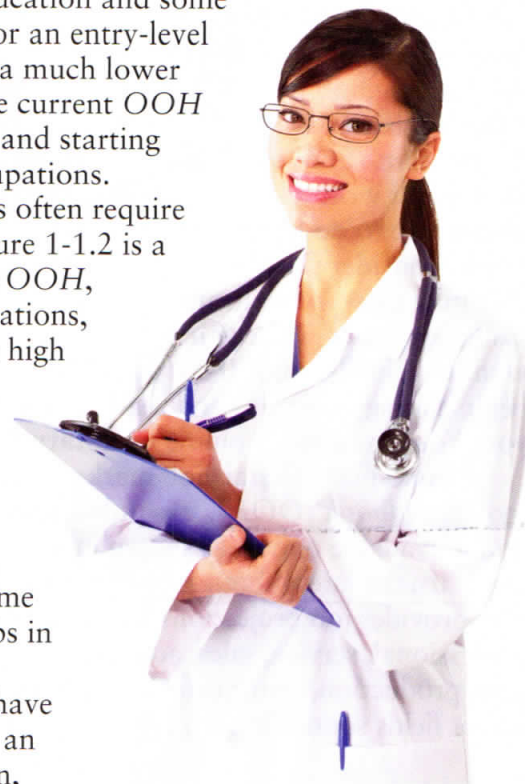
JOB CHOICES AFFECT YOUR INCOME

Some jobs pay a lot more than others and are in greater demand. Generally, the more your skill set is filled with experience, training, and education, the more you can expect to earn. For example, a doctor must have many years of education and training to qualify as a primary care physician. Typically, doctors are well paid. A salesclerk may need only a high school education and some on-the-job training to prepare for an entry-level job. A salesclerk typically earns a much lower salary than a doctor. Look in the current *OOH* for a listing of average earnings and starting salaries for a wide range of occupations.

Today's most popular careers often require a bachelor's degree or more. Figure 1-1.2 is a short list taken from the current *OOH*, listing the fastest-growing occupations, all of which require more than a high school diploma.

The number of jobs in a career area can also affect the income level of those working in that field. When many workers compete for a few jobs, salaries are driven down, and some applicants will likely not find jobs in their chosen career area.

There are careers that don't have high education requirements. As an entertainer, supermodel, musician, or professional athlete, you may make large sums of money.



Why is your level of education an important factor in your job choice?

Figure 1-1.2 Fastest-Growing Occupations, 2008–18

Occupation	Expected Growth 2008–18	Education Required
Biomedical engineers	72%	Bachelor's degree
Network, systems and communications analysts	53%	Bachelor's degree
Home health aides	50%	Short-term training and on-the-job experience
Financial examiners	46%	Bachelor's degree
Medical scientists	41%	Doctoral degree
Physician assistants	39%	Master's degree
Skin care specialists	38%	Post-secondary skills

Source: United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, http://stats.bls.gov/emp/ep_table_103.htm#.

However, these types of careers often last just a few years. They may require natural talent, beauty, or athletic ability that few people have. They can also be very hard on the mind or body. For every person who succeeds in such a career, many others do not.

Learning about Job Requirements

As you look for information about careers, you will see jobs listed by title. A **job title** is a name given to a particular job. It may be a word or phrase that describes the main duties or tasks of the job. For example, the job title *Long-Haul Truck Driver* indicates clearly what the job involves. A person with this job drives a truck for long distances.

Sometimes a job title alone is not enough to tell you what a person in that job is required to do. For example, reading the job title *Systems Analyst* might leave you wondering what a person would do in that job. A **job description** (called “nature of the work” in the OOH) describes what a job would be like, including the tasks performed and skills needed. It often contains other information, such as education or experience required, the hours worked, or details about the work site or location. Figure 1-1.3 is a job description for a physician assistant, a very popular and growing career field today.

job description describes what a job would be like, including tasks performed and skills needed

Preparing for Lifelong Learning

Learning new skills and information to help you stay qualified for a job is important for your job security. When you are hired for a job, you will

Figure 1-1.3 Job Description

Physician Assistant

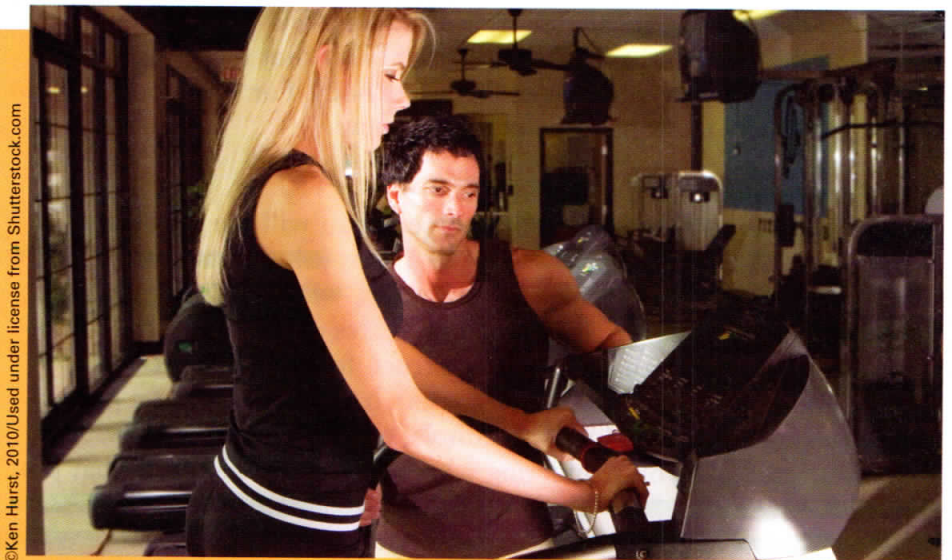
Nature of the Work

Physician assistants (PAs) practice medicine under the supervision of physicians and surgeons. They should not be confused with medical assistants, who perform routine clinical and clerical tasks. PAs are formally trained to provide diagnostic, therapeutic, and preventive healthcare services, as delegated by a physician. Working as members of a healthcare team, they take medical histories, examine and treat patients, order and interpret laboratory tests and x rays, and make diagnoses. They also treat minor injuries by suturing, splinting, and casting. PAs record progress notes, instruct and counsel patients, and order or carry out therapy. PAs also may prescribe certain medications. In some establishments, a PA is responsible for managerial duties, such as ordering medical supplies or equipment and supervising medical technicians and assistants.

PAs work under the supervision of a physician. However, PAs may be principal care providers in rural or inner-city clinics. In such cases, the PA confers with the supervising physician and other medical professionals as needed and as required by law. PAs also may make house calls or go to hospitals and nursing care facilities to check on patients. Many PAs work in primary care specialties, such as general internal medicine, pediatrics, and family medicine.

A PA's work schedule will vary according to the type of medical practice. PAs in clinics usually work a standard 40-hour workweek. Hospital-based PAs may be required to work weekends, nights, or early morning hours.

Source: United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, 2010–11 Edition, <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos081.htm>.



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If you value a certain trait, such as physical fitness, how might it affect your job choices?

probably have the education and skills you need to do that job. As time goes by, however, new technology and advances made in your career field may cause the skills or education needed for the job to change. You will need to update your job skills. *Lifelong learning* will help prepare you to be a skilled worker and an informed consumer.

VALUES AND GOALS AFFECT YOUR JOB CHOICES

As you think about a career that you might pursue, consider the values and goals that are important to you. A **value** is a principle that reflects the worth you place on an idea or action. For example, if you think being honest is important, *honesty* would be one of your values.

Values are important. They define who you are. They influence the choices and decisions you make. Think about what you want to accomplish now and later in life. For example, if you think making a difference in other people's lives is important, then that value could be a reason for choosing one job over another. You might choose to be a teacher or a counselor rather than a salesperson or accountant.

Many people set goals that they want to accomplish. A **goal** is a desired outcome based on one's values for which a plan of action is carried out. A person's goals affect his or her behavior. If you value good health, your goals may include eating properly and exercising regularly. If you want to buy a digital camera, your goal may be to save enough money for the purchase. What goals do you want to accomplish? Can you relate these goals to your values?

value a principle that reflects the worth you place on an idea or action

goal a desired outcome based on one's values for which a plan of action is carried out

CHECKPOINT ▶ ▶ ▶

How are hard skills different from soft skills?

How Does Education Affect Your Income?

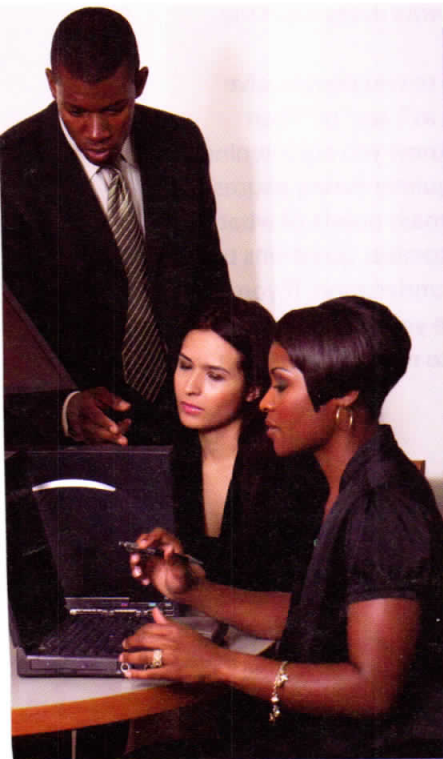
Some jobs require little education. Other jobs require training that takes several years to complete. Education helps prepare you to do a job well. Education can be formal or informal. Formal education involves attending classes and, often, earning a degree. Students must show that they

have learned certain skills and concepts. Informal education usually does not happen in classrooms; it is often a part of working. An example of informal education is **on-the-job training**, or learning as you do the work. Another example is learning new skills from reading and practicing on your own, called **self-training**. Learning to use a digital camera by reading the instructions or teaching yourself a computer program using written or video tutorials are examples of self-training. These skills can also be listed on a resume when you are able to perform them at an acceptable level.

The amount and type of education you complete can affect the amount of money you earn. Generally, people who have a formal education earn more than people who have less education. Figure 1-1.4 shows you the difference you can expect to find in your earnings potential when you complete more formal education. If the pay for a job is high compared to the education required, there is often a reason.

on-the-job training learning as you do the work

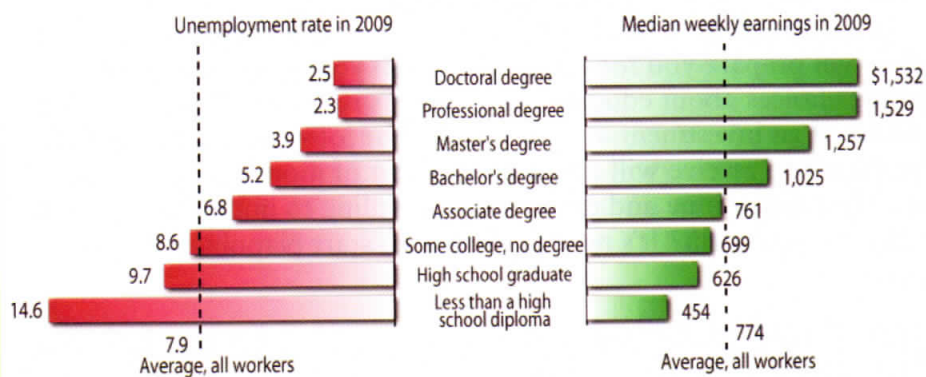
self-training learning new skills from reading and practicing on your own



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How are education and training related to a job's salary or worth to an employer?

Figure 1-1.4 Education Pays



Source: United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_chart_001.htm.



Building Communications Skills

LISTENING

Listening is one of the four basic communications skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing). While hearing is easy, most people have to work at being good listeners. Listening is not the same thing as hearing. **Hearing** is the ability to process sounds. Anyone who is not hearing-impaired is able to hear. **Listening means that information is heard and understood or thought about.** According to the International Listening Association, 85 percent of what we know we have learned by listening.

Listening is an important skill that will help you succeed at school and at work. Practice these tips to help you improve your listening skills:

- Face and look directly at the person who is talking to you.
- Focus on what the speaker is saying. Do not let your mind wander to other topics.
- Ignore distractions such as noises made by other people in the room or someone passing by.
- Turn off (or unplug) the phone and eliminate other noises such as music, if possible.
- When you are part of a group that the speaker is addressing, take notes about what the

speaker is saying. Write only key phrases or main ideas. Do not try to write every word the speaker says.

- In conversations with one or two people, give small feedback cues, such as “I see” or “Then what?” to let the speaker know you are listening. Nod frequently and wait quietly during pauses.
- Mentally summarize the main points of what you have heard. Ask the speaker questions to clarify points you do not understand. If you are listening to someone give you instructions for a task, repeat key phrases to review the important points.

Try It Out

1. Ask the person next to you to tell you about his or her most admired celebrity, public figure, or hero. Practice listening skills listed above. Next, it is your turn.
2. After you have finished listening to each other, write down five new things you learned from listening to the other person. List three listening skills you used during the activity.

The job might require high personal risks, a short career span, or completing tasks that others are not willing to do. For example, the employee might have to handle dangerous materials or work in an unstable country where a war is taking place.

Think about the type of education you want to complete and how well it will prepare you for the career or job you want later in life. Making choices about education is a serious responsibility. Education is considered an investment in your future. The jobs you choose and the education you receive will affect the amount of money you are able to earn. How much time and effort are you willing to put forth to prepare for the job you want? It's never too early to start planning for your future.

CHECKPOINT ▶▶▶

How is formal education different from informal education?