



ACReS
Academic Career and Readiness Skills

**Degrees Open Doors
to Success**

Unit

6



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Post-Secondary Education

Words to know:

- ✓ post-secondary education

The goal of any education program is to produce a person who can live and work well in his or her society. In the United States, education in grades kindergarten through twelve is free. Any education you receive after your high school or GED diploma is called **post-secondary**. It is not usually free. Post-secondary education usually leads to better jobs and better pay. There are many forms of post-secondary education.

Trade Schools and Training Programs

Trade schools offer career or job training after high school. One way to explore your trade school options is to use the Internet. Go to www.tradeschools.net. Scroll down to *Search by Location* and click on it. On the next page, choose one of the ways to further search. You can click on your state. That will bring up all trade and vocational schools in your state and what programs they offer. **OR**, you can click on the *Program Area* you are interested in at the right. As soon as you are on the program page, use the search box at the top to find locations near you.

For practice, go to www.tradeschools.net. Act as if you are interested in vocational training and follow the steps outlined on page 25. Answer the following questions.

1. List five vocational areas of study.
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
 - e. _____

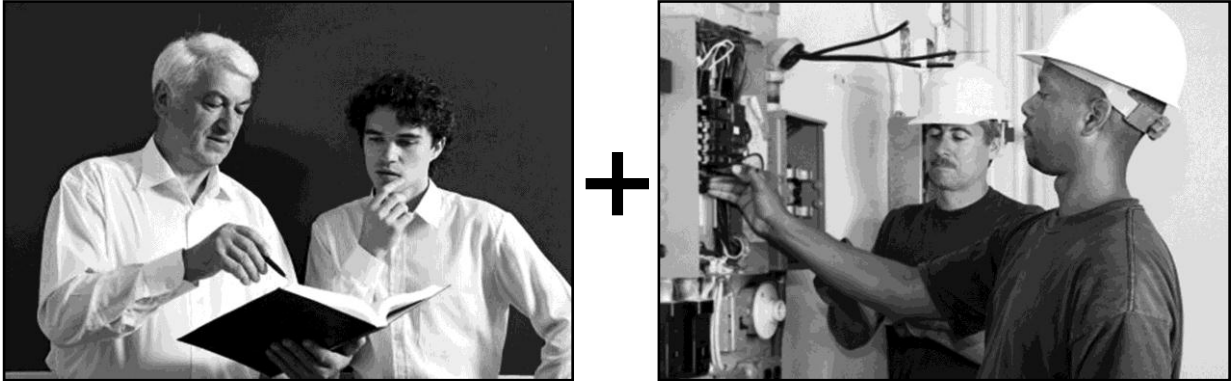
2. What trade were you researching? _____

3. How many trade schools offering that course of study are in your state? _____

4. How many of those schools are near you? _____

5. Is there an online or distance learning option? _____

Apprenticeships



Apprenticeships combine classroom instruction with on-the-job training. Students use what they learn in the class. They work under the supervision of someone experienced in the job. Apprentices are paid while they learn on the job. For this reason, competition for apprenticeships can be intense.

Apprenticeships occur most often in highly skilled manufacturing and construction jobs. Examples include:



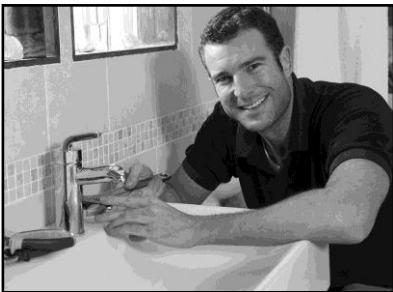
Machinist



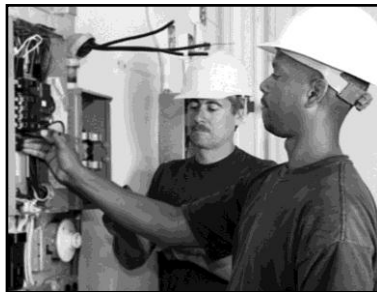
Bricklayer



Firefighter



Plumber



Electrician



Roofer

Other, less common apprenticeships include



Paralegal



Cook



Landscaper



Actor



Computer Programmer

The apprentice period can be as short as one year. Most often it takes four to six years. Apprenticeship programs are registered with the U.S. Department of Labor. Their certificates of completion are accepted by employers across the nation.

How do you get an apprenticeship?

1 Graduate from high school or get a GED certificate. You must be at least 18.

2

Find an open program using these resources:

- Your high school counseling office
- Your state's Office or Bureau of Apprenticeship website
- Your state's Department of Labor website
- Local trade unions and professional organizations (on the Internet and in the yellow pages of the phone book)
- Newspaper listings, job boards, and state job services

3

Apply to the program. You might be required to take an ability test. Tutoring programs are available in some fields.

4

If your application is complete and you have met all the requirements, the next step is an interview.

5

After the interview, all applicants are ranked and put on a waiting list.

6

You will be called when there is an opening for you.

Training Programs Provided by the Employer

Many employers provide training to their new employees. It can be on-the-job or in a classroom setting. The training might be basic and last for only a short time. Or, it might teach the special skills needed for a specific job. Training often allows employees to advance in the company. Some companies also help pay for college courses that improve their employees' skills.

Community or Junior College

Community and junior colleges can be found across the United States. Both offer two-year programs of study. Junior colleges are usually private. That means, they are not funded with public or government money. They are more expensive. Community colleges are public. They are funded with government money.

Community and junior colleges do not usually have residence halls. Students do not live on campus. Instead, they drive, ride, or walk to classes. This is possible because there are so many two-year colleges in the United States. They can be found almost everywhere.

Community and junior colleges offer three kinds of programs:

1. **Transfer programs.** Students take basic courses for two years. They transfer to a four-year college to finish their degree.
2. **Job/Career programs.** Students take courses to learn skills for a specific job. They earn a certificate for employment in that job. In this way, community colleges continue the work of high school vocational programs.
3. **General programs.** People from the community take courses that interest them. The courses help them in life or at work. A two-year degree may or may not be the goal.

Is a community college right for you? Read the chart on the next page about their positives and negatives.

+	-
— focus is on local students and local needs	— lack of on-campus housing often means fewer extra-curricular activities and fewer social benefits of college life
— allows students to save money by living at home	— transfer of credits to a four-year college can sometimes be a problem
— costs less in tuition and fees than a four-year college	— the number and variety of courses is limited, compared to a four-year school
— can work with local businesses to train students for specific jobs	— instructors are part-time and often do not have education beyond a master's degree; often blamed for lower graduation rates
— often works with local high schools; allows students to take college courses while still in high school; courses count for high school and college	— may be regarded as inferior to a four-year college because of the open-enrollment policy
— has “open enrollment” — allows students who might not qualify for a four-year-college to enroll	— people with two-year degrees generally earn less than those with four-year degrees
— usually has fewer time limits on earning a degree — allows students who have jobs to go to school part-time and earn their degree at their own pace	
— class sizes are smaller than those of four-year colleges	
— instructors do not have the other responsibilities of a four-year-college professor (research and writing)	
— four-year colleges often prefer two-year college transfer students, because they have proved they can succeed	
— two-year degrees or training allow students to get a job quickly	

Colleges and Universities

Colleges and universities are schools of higher learning. They offer further education to students after high school graduation. In general, colleges require four years of study. They award bachelor's degrees. Universities include colleges and graduate schools. Graduate schools offer education beyond a bachelor's degree. They award master's degrees and doctoral degrees.

In Lesson 1, you saw a sample of the jobs that require degrees from colleges and universities. In general, they are professional careers that earn high salaries.

Colleges and universities have requirements for admission. A high school diploma or GED certificate is the minimum requirement. The best way to find out about a college or university is to visit its website online.

Degrees Offered by Community Colleges, Colleges, and Universities

Certification (Community College)

- awarded after training of one year or less
- required for a licensing exam in fields like nursing, law enforcement, firefighting, and welding

Associate Degree (Community College)

- a college degree that usually requires two years of study
- allows for entry into some jobs
- may sometimes be used toward a bachelor's degree

Bachelor's Degree (College or University)

- a college degree that usually requires four years of study
- can be used for employment or for further study

Master's Degree (University)

- a college degree that requires one or two more years of study than a bachelor's degree
- requires a bachelor's degree

Doctorate or Doctoral Degree (University)

- highest degree awarded in a given field of study
- can be a research degree (Doctor of Philosophy, Doctor of Education) or a professional degree (Doctor of Medicine, Doctor of Pharmacy)
- average length of study equals seven years

Distance Learning

Distance learning involves independent study. The student does not take the course in a classroom. Instead, materials are mailed to the student for home study. Or, the student accesses the course online. Online courses are becoming more and more common.

Some online courses require the student to “meet” the teacher and other students online at a specific time. All course information and assignments are found only online. Some courses follow a rigid schedule for assignment due dates and test dates. Other courses are set up for the student to complete at his or her own pace.

Distance learning gives students many choices. You choose when to learn and do coursework. You do not have to travel to a college. That can save you time and gasoline. The Internet allows you to interact with teachers and students around the world. It also provides visual and interactive support and information.

However, an online learner has many responsibilities. You must be able to manage time well. No one is going to remind you of deadlines or assignments or tests. It is up to you to balance work and family responsibilities with course work.

Online distance learning requires good computer skills and reliable Internet connection. For some people, that might be a problem. Many people learn better with partners or in groups. In distance learning, there is little or no opportunity to meet with your teacher or other students in person. That can lead to a feeling of being alone. Finally, some schools will not accept online credits toward a degree.

Consider the good and bad features of distance learning before you make a decision. It is also important to check the quality of any online educational program, **before** you pay any money. Features to check:

Accreditation

- means it has official approval
- should be listed on the site’s homepage
- can be checked to see if it is on the U.S. Dept. of Education’s list at
<http://ope.ed.gov/accreditation/>
- accreditation by the DETC (Distance Education Training Council) is **not** accepted by many colleges
- avoid unaccredited schools and courses

Faculty

- Teachers and staff should be listed.
- If they are not, don’t trust the program.
- Research faculty backgrounds.
- Do they hold advanced degrees?
- What is the faculty-student ratio – how many teachers are there to students?

Student Service

- Is contact information shown? (**e-mail and mail addresses, phone and fax numbers, online forms**)
- Call the phone number during business hours. If you get an answering machine, be suspicious.

A high school diploma or GED certificate opens the door to your future. You can choose to work. Or, you can choose to get more education for a better job or career. Research your options. There are many. Choose what is best for you.

Explore an option: You will need access to the Internet.

1. Pick one job or career from this lesson that interests you. Search online for a community college, a college, or a program that offers training for your choice. Recommended website: <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org>. After you have chosen a college or program, refer to its website. Answer the following questions.

a. What are the requirements for the school? _____

b. How long is the course of study? _____

c. List four courses that would teach or train you details about your chosen job or profession.

d. Are any of the courses you need offered online through the program? If yes, how many? _____

Notes:

∞ End of Lesson 4 ∞