

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Career Cluster Match

Connect interests and strengths to broad fields without narrowing too early

GRADES 9-12	TIME 2 x 42 min	FORMAT Individual + partner	PRODUCT Cluster shortlist
YOUR CHALLENGE Analyze 12 broad career clusters, match four fictional student profiles using evidence, then build and defend your own three-cluster exploration shortlist. A cluster is a research doorway, not a permanent track.			

Learning Goals

- Recognize the range of work within broad career clusters.
- Match interests, skills, values, and work-setting preferences to cluster tasks.
- Avoid choosing from job titles or stereotypes alone.
- Develop research questions that test both fit and possible mismatch.

Four Fit Lenses

Lens	Question
Interests	What activities do I want to do?
Strengths / skills	What can I do now, and what could I learn?
Values	What purpose, rewards, or impact matters?
Conditions	Where, when, and with whom do I prefer to work?

Warm-Up

Choose one job you know. List three actual tasks it may involve. Which task sounds most appealing and least appealing?

Part 1 - Cluster Reference Guide

Cluster	Common task verbs	Sample occupations
Agriculture & Natural Resources	grow, protect, inspect, conserve, operate	field technician, food scientist, environmental manager
Arts, Media & Communication	design, perform, write, produce, inform	graphic designer, journalist, audio technician
Business, Management & Entrepreneurship	plan, lead, market, sell, operate	project coordinator, retail manager, entrepreneur
Education & Public Service	teach, coach, counsel, administer, serve	teacher, training specialist, public administrator
Finance & Accounting	analyze, record, advise, audit, manage risk	accountant, financial analyst, loan officer
Health & Human Services	assess, care, assist, counsel, coordinate	medical assistant, therapist, social service specialist
Hospitality, Tourism & Events	host, plan, cook, serve, manage experiences	event planner, chef, hotel manager
Information Technology	support, secure, code, test, manage systems	IT support specialist, developer, cybersecurity analyst
Law, Public Safety & Government	protect, investigate, interpret, enforce, advocate	paralegal, emergency manager, policy analyst
Manufacturing & Skilled Trades	build, install, maintain, inspect, improve production	electrician, machinist, quality technician
Science, Engineering & Mathematics	research, calculate, design, test, solve	lab technician, engineer, data scientist
Transportation, Distribution & Logistics	move, route, repair, schedule, track	logistics coordinator, automotive technician, dispatcher

Part 2 - Profile Match Challenge

Student	Profile
Avery	Enjoys troubleshooting devices, explaining steps to classmates, and working through problems. Wants stable indoor work and ongoing learning.
Brianna	Enjoys planning school events, welcoming people, and solving last-minute problems. Values variety and teamwork.
Carlos	Likes geometry, building, and seeing a physical result. Prefers movement to sitting all day and is willing to complete technical training.
Dena	Enjoys writing, interviewing people, and designing social posts. Values creativity but also wants clear deadlines.

For each profile, choose a primary cluster, a reasonable alternate cluster, and cite two details. Then name one question that could change the match.

Student	Primary cluster + evidence	Alternate + evidence	Question to investigate
Avery			
Brianna			
Carlos			
Dena			

Part 3 - Your Cluster Signal Scan

Rate each cluster from 0 (not interested now) to 3 (strong interest). Add one evidence note; do not rate from title alone.

Cluster	0-3	Evidence from an experience or preferred task
Agriculture & Natural Resources		
Arts, Media & Communication		
Business, Management & Entrepreneurship		
Education & Public Service		
Finance & Accounting		
Health & Human Services		
Hospitality, Tourism & Events		
Information Technology		
Law, Public Safety & Government		
Manufacturing & Skilled Trades		
Science, Engineering & Mathematics		
Transportation, Distribution & Logistics		

Shortlist

My three highest-interest or highest-curiosity clusters are:

One cluster I may have underestimated is _____ because:

Part 4 - Compare Three Clusters

Comparison factor	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3
Two tasks I might enjoy			
One task I may dislike			
Work settings to research			
Education/training question			
One occupation beyond the obvious			
Evidence source I will use			

Stereotype Check

Choose one cluster. Write a stereotype someone might hold about who belongs there or what all jobs are like. Then correct it using the cluster's range of tasks and occupations.

Part 5 - Defend an Exploration Shortlist

Write a recommendation to your future self. Include three clusters, evidence from at least two fit lenses for each, one concern or mismatch, and a next research action.

Cluster	Evidence from two lenses	Concern / mismatch	Next action
1.			
2.			
3.			

Final Justification

Which cluster should you investigate first, and why is it a responsible first step rather than a final decision?

Self-Check

- ☐ I used tasks and evidence, not only job titles.
- ☐ I considered interests, strengths, values, and conditions.
- ☐ I included a concern or mismatch.
- ☐ I identified a concrete next action.
- ☐ I corrected at least one stereotype.

REMEMBER Clusters organize exploration. They do not predict success, guarantee employment, or limit the careers you may pursue.