

## Lesson 2: Consider the Possibilities

*post-secondary: having to do with education beyond high school*

Will you pursue a **post-secondary** education immediately after completing high school? Or will you enter the work force or follow some other interest for a while and then return to school? Perhaps you have left high school and have now returned to complete your diploma so you can pursue your chosen career. Maybe you go to school part-time and hold down a job that helps pay for your education.

There are many choices and possibilities. Consider the following:



- **You can finish high school by taking courses for credit/diploma.** For students who leave high school before they graduate, there are many opportunities to get their general or academic diplomas. They can return to high school, enrol in a special adult-level institution, or register in a distance-education program.
- **You can go directly into the work force.** Some students start jobs right away. These jobs may have been part-time before graduation, they may offer on-the-job training, or they might be jobs that require no training. This option may satisfy many people. Counsellors will often suggest, though, that you should try to take further study so you have more options in the future.
- **You can complete an apprenticeship.** Many trade skills—both specific and transferable—can be learned through an apprenticeship. Apprenticeship involves being employed, earning an income, and being trained at the same time. Apprenticeship usually combines classroom instruction and on-the-job experience.

*apprenticeship: a paid working situation where one learns a trade from a skilled worker*

In Alberta, if you want to learn a trade, you must be an apprentice. You must have an employer who is willing to employ you as an apprentice and who is able to provide you with supervision and training. You can enter an apprenticeship program while you are attending high school.

The Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) allows high school students to become apprentices and earn hours toward an apprenticeship program and credits toward a high school diploma. RAP is an agreement between the employer, the apprentice, and the school. Visit the following website to learn more about Alberta apprenticeship programs, including RAP:

[www.tradesecrets.gov.ab.ca](http://www.tradesecrets.gov.ab.ca)

- ***You can pursue other interests.*** People are often wary about this option; the concern is that if you don't start post-secondary education right after high school, you might never do it. This is not necessarily true. If you have no idea what you should study or what career to follow, it may be a good choice to take time to sort things out. You may choose to take advantage of volunteer opportunities as a way to gain experience in a variety of career opportunities. Some organizations offer volunteers room and board, and some even offer a small stipend.

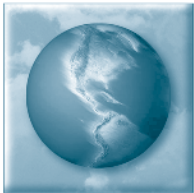


You may choose to travel the country or the world, either independently or through organized exchanges, such as the Rotary exchange program. Many young Canadians go on agricultural exchanges to places like Australia and Japan. Some organizations that combine volunteerism and travel are geared toward youth. Katimavik and Canada World Youth are just two examples. You can explore them at these websites:

- <http://www.katimavik.org>.
- <http://www.cwy-jcm.org>

You might also check out programs offered through religious organizations that provide volunteer opportunities for youth to help Canadians or to help people in other countries.

- ***You can pursue post-secondary education and/or training.*** For most students, post-secondary education is a wise next step. If you have already chosen a career you can enter a specific program. If you are not yet sure what you want to do, you could take more general studies. There are many programs and institutions to consider. Following are some possibilities.
  - Universities have programs that require at least four years of full-time attendance in order to get an undergraduate degree.
  - Community colleges offer a wide range of courses and programs and the opportunity to earn diplomas in many areas of study. Some community college courses can be transferred for university credit after one or two years of study.



**prerequisite:**  
something that is needed before something else can be considered; for example, a certain high school course may be needed for acceptance into a particular college program

– Technical schools offer a wide range of programs and courses with varying **prerequisites** and lengths of study. Education at a technical school may be combined with apprenticeship programs.

– Vocational centres also offer a variety of programs and courses, including upgrading courses and high school completion programs.

– Training programs, workshops, and courses are available through continuing education or distance-learning programs. Usually these programs take

less time than courses that are offered at a school and may provide certification for certain skills. It is important to find out prior to paying for the program whether the certification is of value to employers.

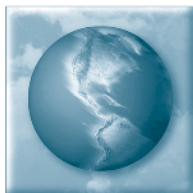
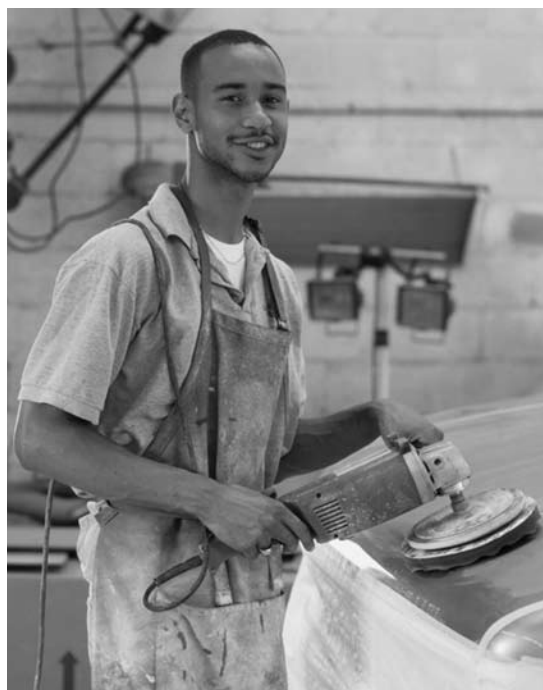
– Private schools, business colleges, and organizations provide opportunities for training in the private sector and civil service. Examples are fire fighters, police officers, computer programmers, and office workers. These programs can vary in usefulness and quality. Therefore it is particularly important before registering and paying for these types of programs to check out the credentials of the institution and the value of the qualifications a student can earn.

– Canadian Armed Forces Recruiting, Education, and Training Systems offer an opportunity for training and education in a range of occupations while in the Canadian Armed Forces. Information is available from the following website:

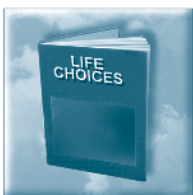
<http://www.forces.ca/v3/Default.aspx?bhcp=1>

- **You can become an entrepreneur.** There are many young people who have created their own businesses at a very young age. For example, you might set up a computer consulting company or a landscaping company. Or, you might be joining a family business or family farm.

If you're not sure what an entrepreneur is, read "What is Entrepreneurship?" on page 48 of *Careers*. This article provides a brief and very positive explanation of some of the skills and attitudes of being an entrepreneur. You'll explore the option of becoming an entrepreneur later in this module.



**entrepreneur:**  
a person who organizes, operates, and assumes the risk for a business venture





To learn more about making career decisions, read “Post-Secondary Education” on page 8 in your *Careers* textbook. This article responds to the following questions:

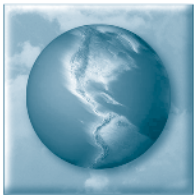
- Who needs post-secondary education?
- Should you choose focused training or general learning?
- How do you make good decisions on where to go and what to take?
- What are the options?
- What are the prerequisites?
- How much does it cost?

Now that you’ve had an opportunity to consider some of the options available to you, respond to the following questions.

1. Which of the possibilities mentioned in this lesson is most appealing to you? Explain why.
2. Which possibility is most practical for you? Explain your choice.

**Compare your answers with the Suggested Responses at the end of the lesson.**

If you haven’t yet decided on what career path you want to pursue, you may find the following websites helpful



- <http://worksearch.gc.ca/>
- <http://www.careerednetwork.ca/> (Click on *students* and then on *CanLearn Student Planner*, which will take you to an Interest Quiz.

Go to page 8 of Assignment Booklet 3A and respond to question 1 of Section 2.

## Looking Back; Looking Ahead

You may already have decided on your plans for after high school; maybe you are seriously considering two or more of the options presented in this lesson. Which do you think you will follow? In the next lesson, you will find out about sources of information and resources you can use to help you make decisions about what career is right for you.

## Glossary

**apprenticeship:** a paid working situation where one learns a trade from a skilled worker

**entrepreneur:** a person who organizes, operates, and assumes the risk for a business venture

**post-secondary:** having to do with education beyond high school

**prerequisite:** something that is needed before something else can be considered; for example, a certain high school course may be needed for acceptance into a particular college program

## Suggested Answers

**1 and 2.** It is best if your most appealing option is also the one that is most practical and the easiest for you to pursue. Sometimes the practicalities of your situation won't let you immediately "follow your dreams." Financial situations may require that you immediately go to work. Relationships with partners, desires of parents, and so on, may also mean you need to satisfy those expectations. If they match up with your wants, great. Otherwise, it may take a while for you to be able to follow what your heart desires.

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