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Career

Career planning

Identify your career goals.

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Learn to write cover letters and develop your resume.

Job interviews

Learn about types of interview questions and how to mentally prepare.



Career

Career planning

Chances are that when you were a child and someone asked you what you wanted to be when you grew up, you had a ready answer—you knew exactly what you wanted to do. Today, however, you may not be so sure. Don't worry—you're not alone.

As added comfort, there are ample resource available to help you find out about opportunities available in your field. You can explore opportunities you never considered or imagined. (You may wish to refer to [Career Shopping? Check Out This Hot Option](#) if you're among today's environmentally conscious job seekers.) You may even be surprised where and how you can put your **skills**, training, education, and experience to work.

Your first step should be to visit a career center or employment counseling service. Each of these is staffed by trained and friendly career professionals ready to guide you in the right direction. What's more, you'll also discover a wealth of resources to help you in your career planning—resources such as occupational profiles, employer directories, and manual and computerized assessment tools.

Assessments bear a striking resemblance to multiple choice tests. While many people have test anxiety, there's no reason to worry when presented with an assessment of this type: your tests won't be graded. Instead, you can—and should—use the results to guide you in choosing a career that best meets your goals and that best matches your skills, interests, values and training.

Assessment tools can reveal a lot about you, including things you may not be conscious of and things you may not have considered. Similarly, such tools may reaffirm what you already **know about yourself**.

There is a wide variety of assessment tools available. Some of these have been developed specifically by career practitioners. All of these help you **identify your skills, interests, preferences, and values**. Which tools you use will naturally depend on what your career counselor suggests and also on your own individual needs. Outlined below are just a few of the commonly-used tools available.

Assessment tools

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator®

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Take A Career Assessment

Our Career Finder Assessment Helps You Find the Best Career. Period.

UnitedCareerServices.com

Free Online Career Test

Not A Quiz, But A Serious Validated Test For Finding The Right Career.

Free-Career-Test.com

Self Assessment Test

Our online assessment test helps you identify your top job skills.

MercerBradley.com/AssesmentTo

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Developed by Isabel Briggs Myers and her mother, Katharine Cook Briggs, **The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator®** (or MBTI) helps individuals determine their personal preferences and strengths based on four dimensions. These four dimensions are used to define personality types and are defined below.

- From where does an individual draw his or her energy? Is the person introverted or extroverted?
- How does an individual gather information? Does he or she analyze facts (thinking)? Or is he or she more prone to explore and infer meanings and possibilities (feeling)?
- How does an individual make decisions? Are his or her decisions objective and based on logic (sensing)? Or are his or her decisions subjective, based on gut feeling and emotion (intuition)?
- How does an individual structure his or her own life? Does he or she prefer structure, planned and orderly activities and routines (judging)? Or is he or she more spontaneous and more open to alternatives and improvisation (perceiving)?

Different combinations of the above criteria determine an individual's personality type. There are 16 types. For example, a person may be of type **ISTJ** (Introvert Sensing Thinking Judging) or of type **ENFP** (Extrovert Intuitive Feeling Perceiving). Some people may show characteristics of two types. An individual who vacillates between introversion and extroversion may be classified as an **E/INFP**.

Want to learn more? Take the [test online](#).

SIGI Plus®

Another tool useful in evaluating your values, interests, and activities is the SIGI Plus®(System of Interactive Guidance and Information) guidance program. SIGI Plus® integrates self-assessment with in-depth and up-to-date career information. By helping you create lists of occupations based on rankings of your values, interests and activities, SIGI Plus® can help you make decisions about your career choices and provide you with more in-depth information about specific occupations.

Strong Interest Inventory®

Based on your likes and dislikes, the **Strong Interest Inventory®** can match you with other people who share your interests. Talking with these people can help you determine whether you might enjoy the same types of careers as they have.

Self-Directed Search

A self-scored test similar to the Strong Interest Inventory® and based on the same premise, the **Self-Directed Search®** assigns individuals a three-letter code describing their personality/career type. An accompanying booklet lists careers from which you can choose possible occupations based on your three-letter code. These lists can guide further occupational research you may want to do.

Want to learn more? Take the [test online](#). (If you would like a complete report, you will be required to pay a nominal fee.)

What can assessment tools do for me?

Assessment tools can help give you career direction and naturally, the more tools you use, the greater the benefit of assessment. Assessments can confirm your interest in a chosen field and reinforce what you already know **about your skills and aptitudes**. Assessments shouldn't be viewed as an attempt to pigeonhole you, but rather, as a means of helping you learn more about yourself, your likes and dislikes, your values, and the types of occupations you might most enjoy.

A growing number of tools are now available online and while you may be tempted to use these independently, Women's Web recommends that you nevertheless seek the help of a career practitioner. This is because a career practitioner or employment counselor can provide context for the results of the various assessments, help you prioritize information, and discuss with you those careers that might best fit you.

What are some additional benefits of assessment?

Having a clear direction and focus may seem reason enough for using assessment tools, but assessments have added benefits, as outlined below. Assessments can help you:

- Articulate your **skills, interests and abilities**;
- Identify what you can bring to a job, as well as what you expect to get out of it;
- Determine the type of organization you would prefer to work for;
- Identify areas of self-improvement and identify ways to hone your skills and turn your weaknesses into strengths; and
- Decide whether you want or need additional training or education.

No time like the present

Career planning may seem quite daunting, and if you've procrastinated, now is the time to begin assessing yourself and your present situation. Women's Web hopes the information in this article will get you on your way to self-discovery and the career of your dreams.

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