

# Exploring Career Clusters & Pathways

## 1. Research Task & Question

When you were a young child, how did you answer the question "What do you want to be when you grow up?" As children we often wish to be like someone we look up to and admire like a parent, a famous person, or a community leader. As you get older, you will discover that there are many other career opportunities to choose from. Why should you begin thinking about this now?

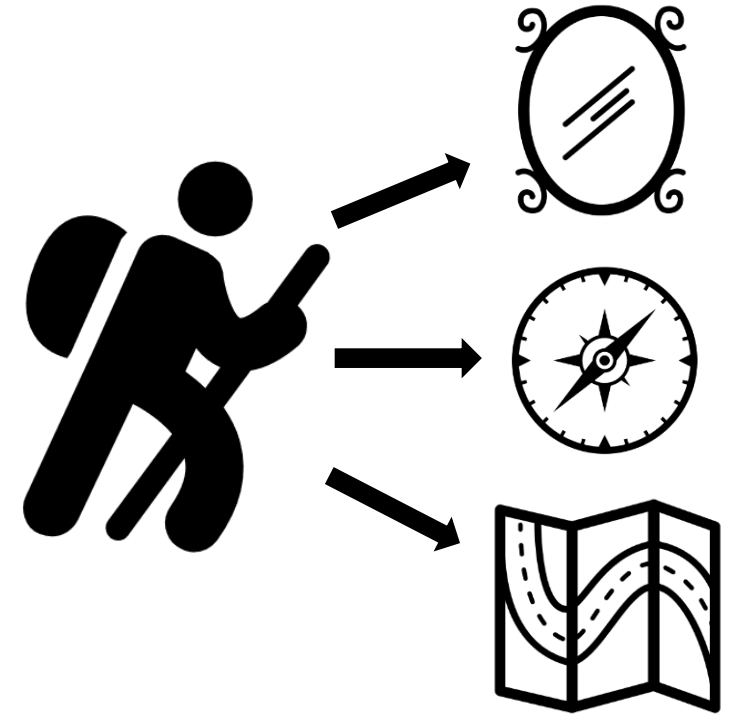
Middle school is not too early to begin considering which careers might be right for you. The earlier you start exploring your options, the more time you will have to narrow down your choices to the careers that suit you best. Then you can decide which educational options would prepare you for a chosen career pathway.

This Slam Dunk research activity is an opportunity for you to begin exploring some career options. You will be using several “tools” to guide your exploration:

- A **mirror** to help you “look at yourself” and reflect on your personal qualities.
- A **compass** to point the way towards related careers called “career clusters.”
- A **map** to help you find educational options that could prepare you for a career pathway.

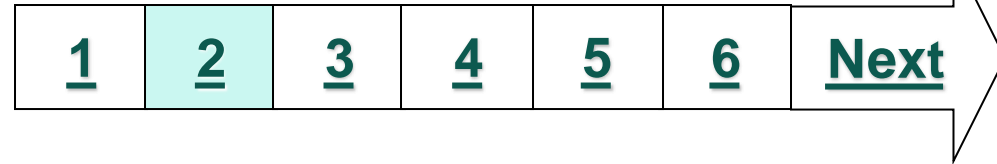
This career exploration will help you to answer the inquiry question:

**How can I choose and prepare for a career path that suits me?**



## 2. Information Sources

Use these resources to complete the Student Activities on Slide 3.



### Resources for the **MIRROR ACTIVITY: Looking at Myself**



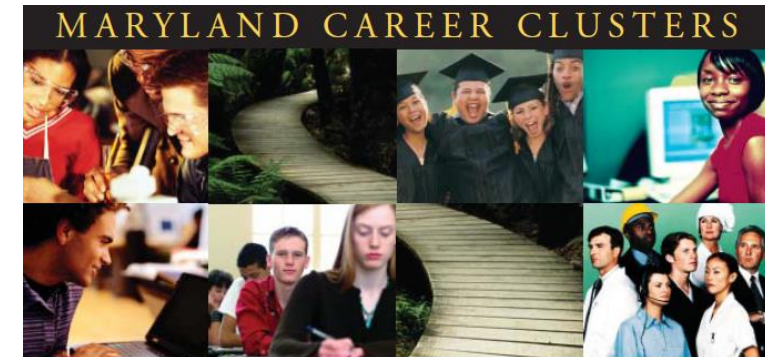
[Glossary](#) and [Matching National & Maryland Career Clusters Chart](#)

Part 1: [How Strong is Your Character?](#)

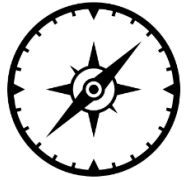
Part 2: [Which Careers Match My Skills?](#) \*Also available as a [worksheet](#).

Part 3: [Career Clusters Activity](#)

Image Source: <http://www.umbc.edu/be-anything/images/pdfs/cclusters.pdf>



### Resources for the **COMPASS ACTIVITY: Exploring Career Clusters**



Maryland Career Cluster Profiles:

1. [Arts, Media & Communication](#)

6. [Health & Biosciences](#)

2. [Business Management & Finance](#)

7. [Human Resource Services](#)

3. [Consumer Services, Hospitality & Tourism](#)

8. [Information Technology](#)

4. [Construction & Development](#)

9. [Manufacturing, Engineering & Technology](#)

5. [Environmental, Agricultural & Natural Resources Systems](#)

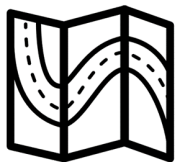
10. [Transportation Technologies](#)

Search for [other careers by National Career Cluster](#). Use the [Matching National & Maryland Career Clusters Chart](#) to identify the Cluster for other careers.



Image Source: <http://www.bcps.org>

### Resources for the **MAP ACTIVITY: Finding Career Pathways**



BCPS Career & Technology Education - [CTE Programs](#)

BCPS High School Magnet Programs - [by Program](#) / [by High School](#) (pg 2-3) | [High School Magnet Transportation](#)

BCPS [Magnet and non-Magnet Career and Technology Education \(CTE\) Programs](#) by Maryland Career Cluster

BCPS High School Courses that may be offered at your zoned high school, by Subject:

[Art](#) [Dance](#) [English/Language Arts](#) [Health](#) [Library Media](#) [Mathematics](#) [Physical Education](#) [Science](#) [Social Studies](#) [World Languages](#)

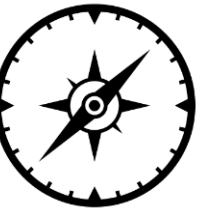
# 3. Student Activities



## MIRROR ACTIVITY: Looking at Myself

One way to begin exploring careers is by “looking at yourself” to think about your personal qualities. Tools called “career interest inventories” can help you to match your personal qualities to some careers.

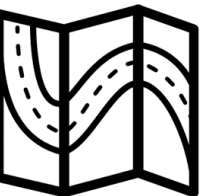
- Use the resources on Slide 2 to complete the [Looking at Myself Log](#) with notes to answer these questions:
  - What kind of person am I? What kind of person do I want to be? (my character)
  - What kinds of things do I like to do? (my interests)
  - What am I good at doing? What are my best school subjects? (my skills)
    - What kinds of careers and career clusters are aligned to my personal qualities?



## COMPASS ACTIVITY: Exploring Career Clusters

Career Clusters contain occupations in the same field of work that require similar skills. The state of Maryland has defined Career Clusters for 10 broad career areas.

- Use the resources on Slide 2 to complete the [Career Clusters Exploration Log](#):
  - Make connections between Maryland Career Clusters, your personal qualities, and suggested careers from the MIRROR ACTIVITY. Start with the 5 Maryland Career Clusters you identified in Part 3 on your Looking at Myself Log.
  - Rank the Maryland Career Clusters 1-10 by how closely they align to your personal qualities/suggested careers.
    - #1 = most closely connected → #10 = least connected.
  - Identify one or more careers that appeal to you from your top 3 Maryland Career Clusters (circle or highlight).



## MAP ACTIVITY: Finding Career Pathways

The Baltimore County Public Schools offer a variety of educational options that can serve as career pathways.

- Use the resources on Slide 2 and the [Finding Career Pathways Map](#) to identify BCPS programs/courses that could prepare you with knowledge and skills needed for careers you identified in the COMPASS ACTIVITY.



## 4. Assessment Activity



Use the information and insights you have gained from the **MIRROR, COMPASS, and MAP** research activities to design a project/presentation in which you explain:

- Which **3 Maryland Career Clusters** are most closely aligned to your **personal qualities** (character, interests, and skills)?
- What are some **specific careers** from these 3 career clusters that appeal to you, and why?
- Which **BCPS educational programs/courses** would prepare you with some knowledge and skills needed for careers that appeal to you?

Use one of these research project/presentation formats:

Poster (with oral presentation), Flipgrid video, Google Slides presentation, PowerPoint presentation (with live or recorded narration)

- You may include images to illustrate career information: draw, cut out pictures from magazines, or locate images online.
- Images obtained online must include attribution (source URL in a caption.)

Use the success criteria on this [Research Project Assessment tool](#) as a guide for doing your best work.

- Have another student peer-evaluate your work to provide feedback, and make revisions if necessary.
- Your teacher will use this criteria to assess your project/presentation.



Select the video above to hear BCPS high school students talk about the benefits of Career and Technology Education (CTE) programs.

## 5. Enrichment Activities

1

2

3

4

5

6

Next

### Continue exploring career choices and preparing a pathway to the kind of career you want!

- Watch the video on the left to create a vision board. Your vision board can be physical or digital (Google Slides).
- Check out this [Career Planning Checklist for Middle School](#), including interactive tools you can use to figure out what kind of student you are and how you learn best.
- Visit [My Next Move](#) to continue exploring careers that match your interests (career profiles and videos).
- Watch these brief videos about the [skills and abilities employers are looking for in job candidates](#).
- Use this [Career Interview guide](#) to interview adult family or community members about their careers.
- Interested in a career in **Automotive Technologies**? Watch the video about [CCBC Automotive programs](#).



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-SA](#)



# 6. Teacher Support Materials

**Grade 6-8 Career & Technology Education/MS EYLP & Title 1 ELO 2017 Time Frame (MS EYLP/Title 1 ELO Reading):** Daily during the Slam Dunk module.

**Objective:** Students will explore the Maryland Career Clusters to identify careers aligned to their interests and educational programs that would prepare them for a career pathway.

**Inquiry Question:** How can I choose and prepare for a career path that suits me?

## Learning Standards Alignment:

**Maryland Career Development Framework Standards** (Grades 6-8)

**Standard 1: Self Awareness:** Students will acquire and apply self knowledge in order to develop personal, learning, and career goals. **A.1b.** Identify one's abilities, strengths, skills and talents as seen by self and others and explain the significance to one's education and career plans.

**Standard 2: Career Awareness:** Students will use the Maryland Career Clusters and Pathways in order to understand their relationship to educational achievement and lifelong learning.

**A.1a.** Identify career clusters and related CTE programs of study. **A.1c.** Research occupations and careers within each career cluster and identify academic and CTE programs of study to inform academic and career planning.

**Standard 3: Career Exploration:** Students will assess Career Cluster choices and related pathways in order to develop an academic and career plan. **A.3.** Investigate program sequences for career clusters including CTE programs of study of interest that overlap with other career pathways.

## Common Core State Standards

**Reading: 1.** Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text. **Writing: 7.** Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

## AASL Standards for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learner

**1.1.6** Read, view, and listen for information presented in any format (e.g. textual, visual, media, digital) in order to make inferences and gather meaning.

**2.1.3** Use strategies to draw conclusions from information and apply knowledge to curricular areas, real-world situations, and further investigations.

## P21 Framework: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Student Outcomes

**3. Information, Media & Technology Skills: Information Literacy** - Access information efficiently and effectively; Use information accurately and creatively for the issue or problem at hand.

**ICT Literacy:** Use technology as a tool to research, organize, evaluate and communicate information.

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>
----------	----------	----------	----------	----------	----------

## Differentiation & Learning Support:

- Students will engage in a **Word Study** of career-related terms from the Maryland Career Cluster Profiles. Students could also use a print/online dictionary like Merriam-Webster's [Word Central](#) or [Learner's Dictionary](#).
- Career videos are closed-captioned and are available in [Spanish](#) if needed for ELL students.

## NOTES TO THE TEACHER:

- **Accessing the Slam Dunk** – directions for accessing via Direct URL (which could be placed directly in Schoology) or Navigation instructions. Have students download/save the Slam Dunk PPT file and use **Slide Show mode** to activate navigation and embedded links.
- **SLIDE 1:** The linked article "[What do you want to be when you grow up?](#)" provides background knowledge for students to discuss reasons for exploring careers now. Students can highlight the text by paragraph and use the pop-up read-aloud speaker to listen as they read; a print PDF option is available. **SLIDE 2-4:** Teacher will need to **review instructions and model** using Information Sources on Slide 2 to complete each of the three Student Activities on Slide 3, and for using research notes to complete the Assessment Activity on Slide 4. Students should be able to work independently on each Activity following this brief direct instruction.
- **SLIDE 2-3 MIRROR ACTIVITY:** Provide each student a print copy of the [Glossary](#) and chart for [Matching U.S. & Maryland Career Clusters](#) to refer to as they complete the online career interest inventories. Provide print copies of the [Looking at Myself Log](#) for note-taking; have students write down their selections in the online inventory as they go along ([before advancing to the next screen](#)).
- **SLIDE 2-3 COMPASS ACTIVITY:** Provide print copies of the [Career Clusters Exploration Log](#) for note-taking. Students must access the **Maryland Career Cluster Profiles** online to view linked videos.
- **SLIDE 2-3 MAP ACTIVITY:** Provide each student a copy of the [Finding Career Pathways Map](#) for note-taking. Provide [several paper copies](#) of each **BCPS High School Course list by Subject** as a reference for the class; students will only need to use the course list for subject(s) related to their chosen career/cluster. You may print other resources if students would benefit from paper copies. The **BCPS Magnet and non-Magnet CTE Programs by Maryland Career Cluster chart** may be printed on [legal size paper](#). Consider having students take home the [HS Magnet Programs Brochure](#) to share with their parents/families.
- **SLIDE 4 ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY:** Provide each student a copy of the [Research Project Assessment tool](#) with success criteria to be used as a guide as students create projects/presentations. Provide poster paper, markers, and other poster supplies, or instructions for creating a PowerPoint presentation or Google Slides presentation. Students may orally present their projects, or may record narration for PowerPoint using a microphone or Flipgrid.
- Consider using the [Schoology Assignment App](#) feature to assign Google Docs for students to access, edit, and submit through Schoology.

Last updated: **July 2022** [Report broken links](#) to **BCPS Library Media Programs & Digital Resources**.