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3 Steps to Choosing a Career

A professional wrestler runs for governor of Minnesota and wins. The owner and pastry chef of my neighborhood bakery is a former investment banker. A friend from college who was a computer scientist for seven years now makes her living as a sailboat captain in Seattle.

How did these people get where they are today? Through a combination of luck, confidence and lots of self-awareness. As you contemplate where your own career might take you after college, it's impossible to know what opportunities fate may throw your way. What you can do, however, is identify your interests, talents and values, and then explore occupations that might make good use of them. If you follow the three-step process below, you won't just be sitting back waiting for careers and jobs to land in your lap. You'll be working toward discovering what makes you happy.

Step One:

Figure out what makes you tick by asking yourself:

- What sparks and holds my interest?
- What do I do well?
- What kind of personality do I have?
- What's really important to me?

Take any career-related tests your college's **career center** might offer. Or think of times when you've enjoyed and excelled at a job, internship, class or aspect of your personal life.

Step Two:

Learn about your career options. Rarely do you have the opportunity to take a class in college that shows you what the work world is like. You have to take the initiative to explore it yourself. See if your college's career office has a library of books describing different kinds of work, the typical qualifications needed and the salary ranges for various occupations. Your college's career coun-

selors should be able to help. Also, talk to people through informational interviews, and try out careers by shadowing and taking internships or part-time jobs.

Step Three

Sort out your priorities. After you've spent time on steps one and two, some of your strong preferences may start to emerge. Or you might find that your interest in art wouldn't sustain a career, so you cross those types of jobs off your list. Whatever it is that you learn about yourself, you're making important discoveries that will help you choose a good career when the time comes.

Most importantly, keep it all in perspective: You don't have to live forever with any career decision you make now. Most people change careers several times during their lives, so the first job you choose right after college probably won't be your career 40 or 50 years from now -- unless you want it to be. So don't put too much pressure on yourself to make the perfect decision, and always keep your eyes open.

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CISC's Services

Our office has a lot of wonderful services to offer you! So make sure you check us out!

- **Career Direct Test**– Discover how your gifts and skills mesh with potential careers.
- **Optimal Resume**– Use this web-based software to write a professional resume. When finished, hit the review button to send it to Sherry Weldy, who will help you polish it off.
- **Career Services Online**– This is the place to find a job or internship. Over 750 employers are registered, and new jobs are posted every day. You must register to use this site.

www.bethelcollege.edu/services/career/

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Career & Intern Services Center

Huffman Administration Building ▲ Room A316 ▲ (574) 257-2661

careerservices@bethelcollege.edu ▲ www.bethelcollege.edu >Campus Services >Career & Internships

7 First Time Resume Concerns

When you're a college student or recent grad and trying to write a resume, especially your first one, you'll face questions you typically won't find addressed in the current blizzard of resume books. That doesn't mean your questions aren't valid; it simply means the resume experts often overlook them, because they generally target mid-career audiences.

As The MonsterTRAK Career Coach, I've seen many versions of the following resume-related questions. It's time for some answers.

1. Should My Resume Be One Page or Two?

If you read enough books or talk to enough people who "know" about resumes, you'll come across a rule stating your resume should be only one page long. It's time to let this myth go, along with the resume handcuffing it spawns.

It's great if you can do this. But if you end up leaving out so much good material that you destroy your interview chances, what good have you done?

Remember: A human will read your resume. Some readers demand your resume be one page. Others will read a two-pager without hesitation. You don't know who's who, but the point still remains -- a one-page rule simply doesn't exist.

2. Should the Education Section Go First or Last?

In most cases, it makes sense to put the Education section at the beginning of your resume, since you're a college student or recent grad. But if you've got a lot of great internship, co-op or work experience closely related to your chosen field, position your Experience section ahead of Education. Here's another resume area where there's no rule: Put it where it makes the most sense for you and your particular skills and experiences.

3. Should I Include My GPA on My Resume?

Yes -- if it's above a 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale). If not, try to make it look better by highlighting your major GPA instead of your cumulative one or calculating your GPA for the last three or four semesters, for example.

4. Should I List My School Address, Permanent Address or Both?

If in doubt, list both -- as long as you can

actually be reached at both. If not, use the address where an employer will actually be able to reach you for the next few months.

5. What Can I Put on My Resume If I Don't Have Much Experience?

For starters, don't overlook or ignore the skills you've gained from jobs you've taken simply to get through school. You've also gained valuable experience from:

Your foreign-language study.

Alternative learning experiences, like studying abroad or conducting research.

Your computer and Internet use.

Extracurricular activities.

6. Should My Resume Include Only Paid Experience?

Employers are interested in your skills, not whether or not you've been paid to learn them. So don't hesitate to highlight nonpaying work and volunteer experiences if they've given you bragging rights.

7. Should I Include Precollege Information on My Resume?

Generally, no -- employers aren't likely to care about it much. There are exceptions, of course. Suppose you won a national award in high school, or you accomplished something extraordinary. Then you should highlight it, especially if it's connected to your chosen field.

Remember: Resume writing is much more art than science, so just as you would with an art project, express yourself the way that works best for you and the information you're trying to portray.

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Job Hunting

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