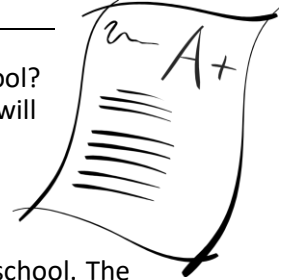


Education Pays Off ... Learn Something!

How much have you thought about what occupation you will seek after leaving school? Not much? That is not unusual. Even if you are among the few who have a plan, you will probably reexamine it several times over the next months and years.

Finding a job is important. Many high school students have part-time jobs and may be familiar with the process of finding a job. However, finding a job after technical school or college is different from finding a part-time job while you are still in high school. The usual routine in finding a full-time job is to write a letter of application, prepare a resume, complete a job application, and cross your fingers, hoping that you will be offered a job interview.



What sort of occupation is right for you? There are abundant sources of information about various occupations and how to find job openings. The Occupational Outlook Handbook in your school library or at www.bls.gov is a great source of information about what occupations pay and how much education is required. Similarly, there are many sources of job openings from your local newspaper to web sites on the Internet.

Not everyone, however, works for someone else. Some people prefer working for themselves. Do you enjoy being independent? Do you have a high level of energy? Do you like to work hard and see projects through to completion? If so, then perhaps you ought to consider starting your own business. After all, there are many opportunities out there for you to be your own boss.

Ever notice how people in some occupations earn more money than others? Michael Dell is worth billions while people who run gourmet coffee shops earn a whole lot less. Why is that? One of the main explanations has to do with an individual's level of education. Economists call education and training "human capital." On average, people who have higher levels of education earn more, sometimes significantly more, than those with lower levels of formal education. For example, people who graduate from high school earn more than those who do not. People who have some college usually earn more income than people who never go to college. Decisions about education should be looked upon as an investment in your human capital. Investing time and effort in your education will provide you good returns in the form of higher income over many years.

If you work a part-time job, perhaps you had a rude surprise when you received your first paycheck. You might have figured that your paycheck would simply be the total of the number of hours worked multiplied by your hourly rate of pay. Many young people are surprised to learn about deductions from their paychecks. Some of these deductions are optional, but many are mandatory. Optional deductions might be contributions to a company retirement plan. Mandatory deductions are payments for income taxes and Social Security. Uncle Sam takes a bite!

Questions

1. What are some steps involved in getting a job?
2. If you want to earn a living, do you have to work for somebody else? Explain.
3. Is there a payoff for investing in your education? If so, what is it?
4. Is your paycheck the total number of hours worked times your rate of pay? Explain.