

Researching Career Interests (Mt. SAC)

(Using Appropriate Sources of Information)

The purpose of Paper #2 is to encourage you to explore education and/or career subject that are of personal interest to you. If you have already decided on a specific career or major, you may choose to use that. However, if you have yet to decide on a major, or are curious about other options, you may choose a topic as you wish. However, to simplify your paper-writing process, you are advised to focus on **ONE** subject for this paper.

The required components are as follows (at least one each):

1. **Library Resources:**

Periodicals (magazines, newspapers, professional and/or educational journals) are those publications that are published on a repeating cycle.

Books – include at least one book reference in your research. This book can give you more information on a particular industry (publishing, agriculture, engineering, education, etc.) or on a specific career (teacher, doctor, lawyer, journalist, etc.), or on job searching information in general. To be effective, books should be less than ten years old. (*The Career Center may have more books as well.*)

You are free to reference your “Introduction to Type and Learning” booklet I gave you after giving you your Myers-Briggs results. You may also use my MBTI and career books as a reference. There are two books on reserve in the library under my name. See your MBTI Best-Fit (Extra Credit Section) for information on how to access this book.

Reference Books – Reference books are those books not intended to be read from cover to cover. Rather, like a dictionary or directory, you refer to them only for specific information at a given time. The library will contain reference manuals containing career-related information. These are often a good place to start, and they often can give you basic information about careers such as working environment, required skills, and experience.

<http://www.mtsac.edu/instruction/learning/library/Careers.html>

2. **Mt. SAC Library**

The Campus library has a lot of career resources to help you research your career interest. Check out their career research resources at:

<http://mtsac.libguides.com/career>

3. Career & Transfer Center Resources

Go to the Career & Transfer Center to access their many resources to help you research your potential career choice. You can also go to their websites to find links to additional sites.

- <http://www.mtsac.edu/students/transfer/>
- <http://www.mtsac.edu/students/counseling/career.html>
- <http://www.mtsac.edu/students/careerservices/index.html>

4. Internet Research:

Using the Internet, find out more about your area(s) of interest as related to majors and careers. If necessary, the library or Counseling Services should have a list of addresses, or you can surf on your own. **Be sure to cite the addresses in your final report**, as well as any helpful information you happened to find.

Note: Wikipedia is NOT considered a credible source for academic research papers. So do NOT use this source. If you do, your overall grade will be lowered.

- Occupational Outlook Handbook:** (<http://www.bls.gov/oco/home.htm>)
The Occupational Outlook Handbook can give you information on employment trends. Be sure to include any employment trend information you find in your research paper. For example, what if you discover that the career that interests you is a dying trade? Would you want to invest four years of study for something that may not be marketable when you graduate?
- O-Net:** <http://www.onetonline.org/> Is a searchable online database created by the U.S. Government, Department of Labor to allow access to anyone wanting to search for occupation-related information. Gives information such as knowledge and skills needed to do a particular job.
- Career Cafe:** <http://www.cacareercafe.com/> (A free, virtual career center created by the California Community College system). It can help in identifying possible career choices. Provides starting point resources to get you started on your career journey. It is accessible to anyone via the Internet. A good resource to potentially help someone who doesn't know where to begin, or does not have access to (or can't afford) a career counselor; **but is not an equivalent substitute for working with a trained career counselor.**
- Current Job Postings at possible future employers**
One good way to get information is to find postings for current job openings at an employer where you might want to work (*police officer recruitment for a certain city, nursing recruitment at a local hospital,*

teacher recruitment flyer for a preferred school district, etc.). Such job postings will usually include information such as: Job description, examples of duties, minimum qualifications (including education, experience and technical skills), preferred qualifications, salary range, working environment and physical requirements to perform the job. They can also help you identify possible job titles. The best way to find these, is to go to a Human Resources Department website for a possible prospective employer and look at their: 1) List of current openings 2) List of job classifications (*if available*).

- e. **Professional Associations** **AMA** (*American Medical Association*), **CTA** (*California Teachers Association*), **PRSA** (*Public Relations Society of America*), **APA** (*American Psychological Association*), etc. Most professions have associations which often establish codes of ethics and standards, oversee professional training programs, keep their members informed of new laws and trends in their industry, and provide opportunities for professional networking. These professional associations are often listed in the Occupational Handbook Outlook Guide and other career research tools) and links are often provided by schools which train for them. These associations can often be a good source of information regarding trends in the industry.

California Career Café (listed above) has a list of professional associations to help you get started: <http://www.cacareercafe.com/cool-connections/>

f. **WorkNet Solutions**

As an additional resource, you may also want to see if WorkNet Solutions has material that can help you as you explore your interests. Their materials are available from <http://www.worknetsolutions.com>.

When using this information in your research paper, you need to indicate what information you found, where you found it, and whether the information interested you or turned you off. Also, like solving a crime, what clues or leads did this information provide?

5. **Academic Major:**

Obtain specific information about an academic major or educational preparation program that is designed to prepare future employees in the field that you are considering.

The kind of information you should try to discover includes the following:

- What schools offer such training programs?
- If you discovered more than one school, what are the differences between the way the different schools teach it?
- Upon completion, how much education should you expect to have (i.e. 6-month certificate program, Bachelor's degree, or Master's degree or Doctorate degree)?
- How long will the course of study take?

- What are some of the courses you would be required to take?
- What are some of the admissions requirements in order to be accepted into the program?
- What are some possible career opportunities for people who graduate from such a program?

Where do you get this information?

- The extra credit School Research Project assignment offered:
 - Our campus's student support offices:
 - Career Center
 - Transfer Center
 - The school's website
 - The school's official catalog
 - The school's Admissions office
 - The school's academic department for your major.

When using this information in your research paper, you need to indicate what information you found, where you found it, and whether the information interested you or turned you off. Also, as before, what clues or leads did this information provide?

Use Understanding Education (Research Paper Section) to help you understand what the educational requirements will mean to you personally.

Any relevant information regarding the academic program of your choice can be found in the school's catalog (in print or online). The catalog will contain graduation requirements, course listings, course descriptions, and course pre-requisites.

6. Informational Interviews:

(See "Informational Interview" Assignment for more information.)

1. Professor Interview(s):

Once you have received as much information as you can from reading literature or Internet sites, you should set up an interview with a professor in an academic department that interests you. Ask about the curriculum, for the major, internship possibilities, career options, and what advice can s/he pass along to you.

In the final report, indicate what they told you, who said it, and whether the information interested you or turned you off. Also, what clues or leads did this information provide?

2. Professional Interview:

Set up an interview with someone who does the job which you are considering as a major. For example, if you are studying print journalism, then interview a reporter. Or if you are considering biology, then consider interviewing a

doctor. If you are considering theology, consider interviewing a pastor. If you do not know of such a person, ask the professor whom you interviewed if they know of alumni (one of their graduates) that you could contact. Get two or three names in case the first doesn't work out. The purpose of this assignment is to get the perspective of a real-world practitioner. Refer to the handout "Conducting Informational Interviews" for more information.

7. Extra Credit Assessments:

(See "Self Awareness Wrap Up" more information.)

1. Career Assessments (10 pts. Each) – Counseling Center:

You will receive 10 points each for taking personal assessments offered through the counseling session. When you go in to see the counselor, tell them I have instructed you to take the Strong Interest Inventory or COPS assessment. Tell your counselor that you have already taken the Myers-Briggs. Your counselor will know what it is. If s/he recommends additional assessments you should take, I will give you 10 extra points for taking them. Once you get the results back, write up and submit a typed assessment evaluation (sample format is attached).

Also, be sure to include this information in your research paper. However, I strongly recommend that you include this information early in your paper as self-assessment should be the beginning of career exploration. (See handout on Career Development Planning Process)

Put it all together!

You will write your research paper on what you discovered about the career or major from your research and interviews. In addition to facts, relate the information to yourself...did this spark more of an interest for you, or turn you toward another direction? What will be your subsequent steps (e.g. declare this as your major, research other options, continue to look into the career options)? See Research Paper Guidelines

Basically, if you have done the prior three exercises, then this paper will just combine the information and provide some conclusions. This paper should be three to six pages (double-spaced, 12pt font) long.