



The Career Starter Pack

Discover your passions, explore different career paths, and set yourself up for a rewarding and fulfilling professional journey. Let's embark on this transformative adventure together and unlock your true potential!

- 1 Identify your skills and interests
- 2 Explore career ideas
 - a. Write a CV
 - b. Draft a cover letter
 - c. Get some work experience
 - d. Talk to people already in the industry
- 3 Decide on a route (e.g. would you like to go to university or do an apprenticeship or something else)
- 4 Set SMART-ER goals

1. Identify your skills and interests

You spend a lot of time working after education, whether you choose to start your own business or get a 9 – 5. Because of this, it's important to do something you enjoy and something that aligns with your values. One way to do this is to pick a path that aligns with your skillset.

Your first step therefore is to identify the current skills you have, what experience you have that helped you develop those skills and the skills you need to improve on.

Activity

Note down answers to the following questions

1. What am I good at?

2. What are my interests, motivations and values?

3. What did I most enjoy at school?

4. What kind of lifestyle do I want?

5. What do I want from my career?

6. What is important to me?

2. Explore Career Ideas

Write a CV / Draft a Cover Letter

Do you know how to network, or how to write a CV or cover letter? Do you know how to act in a professional business environment? If not, check out our guide below to get you work experience ready:

CV Writing & Cover Letter Writing Guide

Get Some Work Experience

Work experience isn't always advertised, so it's important that you know how to capitalise on every opportunity that may be presented to you to get the right experience. This is not a guaranteed way to get work experience, but when it works it can be very fruitful. Consider tapping into your network (friends, family, LinkedIn) and checking what opportunities they know of in the industries you're interested in.

If you have to look outside of your network, make sure you are personalising your message using our sample template in the speak up, stand out resource.

Aside from that, the student ladder website is a great resource for work experience opportunities for year 10 – 13 students

Talk to People Already in the Industry

Networking is a core skill you'll need to develop regardless of what you decide to do after school. We understand that it can be daunting to think about what questions to ask, so we've collated some of our favourites down below:

How to start the conversation

Hi,
I see that you do [x role] I've always been interested in learning more about that. I'd love to hear more about your journey and how you've found working in this role so far.

How to exit the conversation	<p>It was a pleasure speaking to you. I'm going to take a look at [x] , but if I don't run into you later I hope to stay connected with you – would you mind if I connect with you on LinkedIn?</p> <p>I have to head out right now, but I really enjoyed learning more about your work. Could we connect on LinkedIn?</p>
Open ended questions to find out more about the individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How long have you been in your current role? • Can you tell me about your route into this role? • What's been your greatest challenge in your career? • If you could give advice to your younger self what would you say?
Open ended questions to find out more about the business	<p>What is your typical work day like?</p>

3. Decide on a Route

Apprenticeship vs University.

With an apprenticeship you're employed to do a real job while studying for a formal qualification. (Source: Prospects)

- You earn at least the National Minimum Wage while you train.
- You do formal assessments which lead to a nationally recognised qualification.
- There are various levels of apprenticeships.
- Different apprenticeship levels equate to different qualification levels and take different lengths of time to complete.

Intermediate Apprenticeship	Advanced Apprenticeship	Higher & Degree Apprenticeship
Level 2 12 – 18 months Equivalent to 5 GCSEs A* – C	Level 3 18 – 48 months Equivalent to 2 A-Levels	Level 4, 5, 6, 7 24+ months Equivalent to foundation degree level +

Benefits of Apprenticeships

- An alternative for those who find traditional academic routes not fitting for them.
- An ideal way to gain real-life practical experience in the role or sector of interest.
- You can still do a uni degree alongside so it provides you the option to have both.
- There are no student fees – your training costs are funded by the government and your employer.
- It teaches you the skills, knowledge, and experience you need to get into many careers.

Things to consider...

- Entry Requirements– At different levels, different existing qualifications (such as GCSEs) may be required.
- It's not an easy way out– Apprenticeships aren't an easier option to traditional academics, it's just different.
- Consider the Sector – Not all employment sectors offer apprenticeships.
- Do your Research! – Make sure you research the different courses available and whether they're right for you.

Where should you look for more info?

- www.apprenticeships.gov.uk
- www.prospects.ac.uk/jobs-and-work-experience/apprenticeships
- apprenticeshipguide.co.uk
- www.ucas.com/understanding-apprenticeships

If you want to go to university, have a think about what course you'd like to study. You can ask people when you're networking what courses they've studied to learn more. If you do decide to apply, you'll need a personal statement.

It's important to show you've gone above and beyond your curriculum when it comes to your personal statement. Read articles and books or listen to podcasts around your subjects so you can talk about them in your statement. Be sure to also focus on your transferable skills e.g. the soft skills you gained from your experiences. Here are some more personal statement tips:

- With such limited space, you can't afford to give sweeping statements.
- Every sentence needs to be INTENTIONAL and you need to link back to your degree programme and why the admission officers should care about what you're saying.
- Show don't tell- Provide evidence to show your passion and back up any statements you make. (Evidence can be so many things from subject modules, TedTalks, academic journals or news articles)
- Link your other A-Level subjects to your degree- talk about relevant modules, how something you learnt in them could be viewed or understood differently through the lens of your degree subject or how your other subjects further your understanding of this one.
- Speak to subject teachers and gain recommendations for podcasts, journal articles, lecturers and books that explore your subject beyond the curriculum.
- Newspaper articles, YouTube videos, podcast episodes and TedTalks are your best friend as they aren't as time-consuming so you can find them easily, read/watch them quickly and use them to show engagement in your subject.

4. Set SMART-ER Goals

Remember, steps 1 – 3 might take you a while to figure out and that's okay; there's beauty in the journey. Once you have made a decision however, it's important to set SMART-er goals to achieve them.

A Recap...



S

Specific

The more specific you are about your goals, the better and more able you'll be to accomplish them no matter what method you use.



M

Measurable

The more quantifiable your goals are the easier they are to reach.



A

Achievable

Your short-term goals should be something within your reach, but not so easily attainable that they won't take much work or effort on your part.



R

Relevant

This means that the goals should be inline with and in harmony with what you want out of life; they should match up with your core values.



T

Time-bound

You have to set an exact date on when you plan to achieve these goals. Focus on goals that are in 3-month intervals.



E

Evaluate

Make sure that you set up a system for evaluating your goals and you make the evaluation of your goals habitual.



R

Review

When the deadline for your goal comes, assess what you did well and what you could have done better.

Activity

Use the Framework below to create your own SMART-ER career goals.

1. **Specific:** What is your goal?

My goal is _____

2. **Measurable:** How will you keep a track of your progress?

I will track my progress by _____

3. **Achievable:** How will you achieve your goal? Make a plan?

I will achieve by goals by _____

4. **Relevant:** How will this goal help you?

This goal helps me because _____

5. **Time Bound:** When will you achieve this goal?

I hope to complete this goal by (date) _____

6. **Evaluate:** How do you plan to check on your progress?

I will check on my goals by _____

7. Review: What did you do well? What could you have done better?

WWW What Went Well	EBI Even Better If