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Career/Personality Tests: Find What You Want to Do

By **Debra Karplus**

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What do you want to be when you grown up?

We've been asked the same question since we started grade school. Back then, [career](#) dreams ran big: firefighter, doctor, movie star, sports hero, the President of the United States.

However, now that you are actually in college preparing for what you want to do, or if you are looking for a new job and possibly a career change, the answer to that question may no longer feel so simple.

When making a career decision the two most important things to consider are making enough [money](#) and job satisfaction. The money part is a no-brainer: don't work, don't eat. But, job satisfaction should also be high on the list. It's important to come home each day feeling like you've spent your time productively, and perhaps even made a difference to others.

START WITH A SELF ASSESSMENT.

You inherently know your likes and dislikes and your personal strengths and weaknesses. Perhaps you enjoy working at a computer. Maybe your best work is done at home on your own schedule. Or possibly you enjoy being the boss, working in an office managing others. Some people prefer a job where they are physically active. Always be honest and realistic with yourself. For example, if reading has always felt like drudgery, perhaps law school isn't in your future.

STILL IN SCHOOL? ASK A CAREER COUNSELOR.

Career placement offices in high school, community college or university employ advisers who are specially trained to assist you in career planning. Nothing takes the place of face-to-face, free assistance from a skilled counselor; they have many resources about specific careers and can also refer you to books and websites for additional guidance. Your college's website may even have useful career planning [tools](#).

Tests and checklists help match your personality, skills, training, interests, values, needs, and goals to a career that fits you. Some assessment tools are done with the help of your school adviser. If you are no longer in school you can find plenty of others online, free or for a nominal fee. Consider contacting a [career coach](#), a professional who can help you pinpoint what you want, achieve your goals and help you to stop wasting your time.



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THE KUDER ASSESSMENT CAN BE COMPLETED ONLINE.

Dr. Frederik Kuder developed a career planning [system](#) in 1938 which has evolved into an Internet-based tool that has undergone several revisions; it's used worldwide today to help plan for career success. Its three components take approximately twenty minutes each to complete. Instantaneous, easy-to-read and interpret results are one of its many benefits. The tests are appropriate for middle school aged students through adulthood. The assessments may be done for free through your school's career center or can be conveniently completed online for \$19.95.

The **Kuder Career Search with Person Match** is an interest assessment which helps you establish your occupational self concept. Its 180 questions guide you to satisfying occupational roles. Each item has a verb and an object, such as take dance lessons, that you rank by preference. Its interactive feature allows you to link to suggested occupations in the Occupational Outlook Handbook.

The **Kuder Skills Assessment (KSA)** has 160 items and helps assess your current skill level. You decide what you're good at. Each item has five levels. You identify abilities and weaknesses on this assessment tool.

The third part of the Kuder [Career Planning](#) System is its **Work Values Inventory**. Making money, being creative or something in-between, this inventory provides five choices for each item to determine what work features you value.

www.kuder.com

THE MYERS-BRIGGS TYPE INDICATOR CAN GIVE YOU INSIGHTS INTO YOUR PERSONALITY TYPE.

Since the 1940s, the Myers-Briggs (MBTI) personality test has been used worldwide. It's administered by trained counselors with ninety-three items offering a dichotomy of two responses. Are you an extrovert or introvert, sensing or intuition, thinking or feeling, judging or perceiving?

The results of the MBTI provide sixteen distinct personality types and offer career-related suggestions. Some people have even interpreted the results of the MBTI to better understand interpersonal relationships within these different personalities.

<http://myersbriggs.org>

COLLEGE PLACEMENT TESTS MAY GUIDE YOU TOWARD APPROPRIATE CLASSES.

The COMPASS is a collection of computer-adaptive college placement assessments that help determine your skill level in several academic areas. Administered by school counselors, it tests proficiency in math, reading, writing skills, and essay-writing. Your college career center is likely to offer this, or some other standardized placement tests.

Many people change majors while in college. The only real disadvantage to this is that you may need to take additional classes to earn your Bachelor's Degree, costing more money and time. Many adults change careers either by choice or as a function of company downsizing. Pink slips are never welcome. But the silver lining behind this perceived cloud is that a more suitable career may be in your future. Use personality and assessment tests to assist your career planning.

www.act.org/compass/

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