



L I F E S K I L L S  
H A N D B O O K S  
™

# Job Search

Workplace Readiness  
Occupational Training  
Applying for a Job  
The Job Interview



21st CENTURY

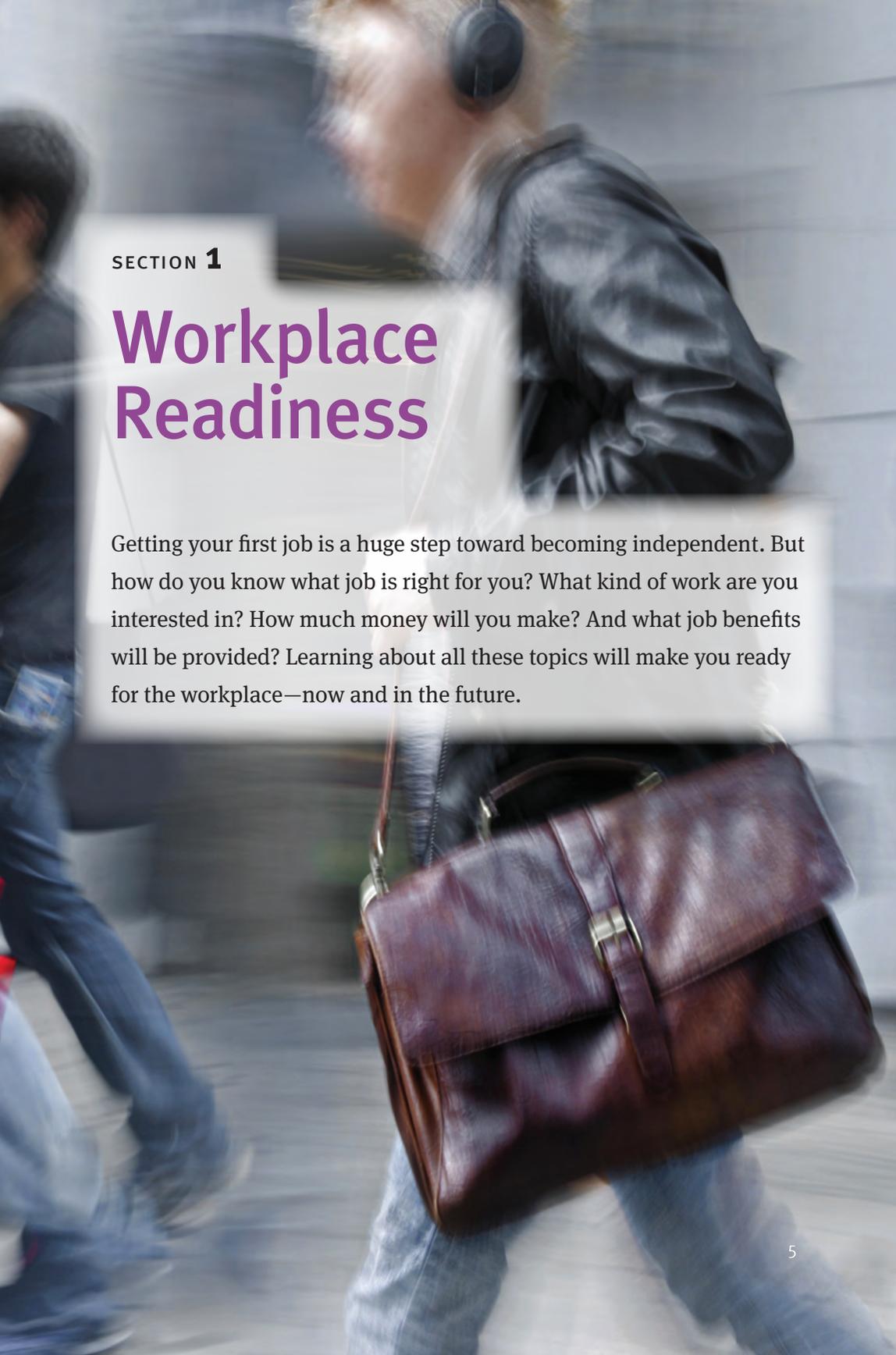
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SECTION **1**

# Workplace Readiness

Getting your first job is a huge step toward becoming independent. But how do you know what job is right for you? What kind of work are you interested in? How much money will you make? And what job benefits will be provided? Learning about all these topics will make you ready for the workplace—now and in the future.



### Planning for a Bright Future

Maura wasn't surprised when her high school guidance counselor told her she should be a veterinarian. That was the career recommended by a test she'd taken. The test was about personal interests and possible careers. But Maura had known long before taking the test that she'd like to work with animals.

Becoming a veterinarian would mean going to college for about 10 years. Maura had learned about the educational requirements by reading online. She'd also learned about where vets work and what kinds of





things they do. Wanting to know more, Maura visited several area animal clinics. She learned a lot by talking to the doctors about their work.

Ten years was a long time, for sure! But Maura had a plan for how to become a vet. She'd gotten a job in one of the clinics she visited. She planned to work there the summer after high school and then during college. She would start attending college at the local university. But to go to veterinary school,



she would have to move out of state. Getting good grades in her early college years would help her get into vet school. And having experience working in an animal clinic would help her get another part-time job after she moved.

Maura's plan covered both her education and her work experience. She was sure that following that plan would help her reach her goal of becoming a veterinarian.



CHAPTER 1

# Aptitude Tests and Interest Inventories



In the world of work, you have many different job choices. But what kind of job will be best for you? Which **trade** or **profession** will give you the most satisfaction? Which **occupation** will best match your skills and interests?

**Trade**

A job that requires skill in work done by hand or using machines. Examples include electrician, carpenter, machinist, and plumber.

**Profession**

A job that requires knowledge and skills developed through formal education and training. Examples include accountant, teacher, lawyer, and doctor.

**Occupation**

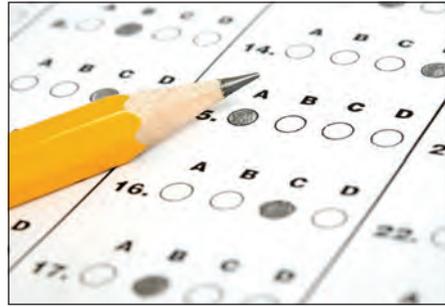
A person’s main job or usual business. Most people earn their living through their occupation.



## Learning About Your Skills and Interests

You can learn the answers to these questions by taking two kinds of tests:

→ **Aptitude tests:** The word *aptitude* means “skill” or “ability.” An aptitude test helps determine what you’re good at. This kind of test isn’t like a math or history exam. It’s often given on a computer with special software or on a special Web site. The questions on an aptitude test are designed to discover your natural abilities. They’re also designed to see how quickly or easily you figure things out or learn new information.



→ **Interest inventories:** An inventory is a survey or checklist. An *interest inventory* might ask you to read a list of activities and check the ones you’d like to do. After you answer all the items, you’ll get an evaluation of your answers. It will suggest kinds of jobs that seem right for you. For instance, it might tell you that you should work outdoors or that you like to help people.



## [FACT]

### Types of Aptitude Tests

As many as 5,000 different aptitude tests are available. All of them evaluate one or more of the following areas:

1. **Verbal ability:** How well you communicate
2. **Numeric ability:** How well you do basic math
3. **Abstract reasoning:** How well you understand complex concepts and solve problems
4. **Spatial ability:** How well you mentally work with shapes
5. **Mechanical ability:** How well you understand mechanics and engineering
6. **Data checking:** How well you find errors in numbers and other detailed information

### Sample Questions

Here are some questions similar to those you might find on an aptitude test:

1. DeShawn is shorter than Dan.  
Devon is shorter than DeShawn.  
Who is the shortest of the three?
  - a. DeShawn
  - b. Dan
  - c. Devon
  - d. None of the above
2. What number should come next in this series: 1 1 2 3 5 ?
  - a. 7
  - b. 10
  - c. 8
  - d. 9
3. *Lake* is to *puddle* as *wide* is to
  - a. river
  - b. short
  - c. narrow
  - d. tiny
4. Which word should come first alphabetically?
  - a. bland
  - b. blame
  - c. bran
  - d. blank



Here are some questions like those you might find on an interest inventory:

1. Which would you rather do?
  - work with people
  - work with machines
2. Where would you prefer to work?
  - indoors
  - outdoors
3. Which of the following do you most enjoy?
  - watching sports on TV
  - reading a book
4. When you are feeling sad, what would you rather do?
  - be by yourself
  - be with other people





## Taking Aptitude Tests and Interest Inventories

School guidance counselors can usually give various kinds of aptitude tests and interest inventories. Your counselor can interpret your answers and help you decide which careers you might look into.

Also check the library for books about aptitude tests and interest inventories. Look for explanations of how they work. You can find these tests and inventories online, too. If you want to, you can test yourself. Then you can match your results with different job types and career categories.

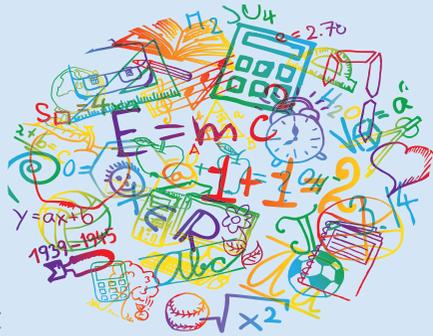
No matter how you go about it, exploring your aptitudes and interests is an important first step in a job search.





## Uses of Aptitude Tests

According to the American Management Association, 70% of US employers use some kind of skills test. One of the most common uses of these tests is to review job applicants. For most jobs, employers test applicants in at least basic math and language skills. For some jobs, specific skills tests are given, too. For example, suppose you're applying for a job in engineering or electronics. You would likely be given a test of mechanical ability.



## Preparing for an Aptitude Test

It would be difficult to prepare for an aptitude test by studying all the material it might cover. You can prepare, though, by understanding what the test will be like:

- **Multiple-choice questions:** Most aptitude tests ask multiple-choice questions. To get credit for a question, you must select the correct answer from among several choices.
- **Strictly timed format:** Most aptitude tests follow specific time requirements. A typical test might allow you 30 minutes to complete 30 questions.
- **Exam conditions:** Some aptitude tests must be taken on paper at a testing center. Others can be taken online from home or work.

