

PFL Academy

Teacher Guide: Chapter 1.1 — Jobs vs. Careers

OVERVIEW

TIME	MATERIALS	PREREQUISITES
45-50 Minutes	Student Activity Packet	None

LESSON FLOW

5 min THE CHALLENGE

- Read Maya's scenario aloud or have students read silently.
- Discussion: "Has anyone worked a job that felt like 'just a paycheck' versus one with growth potential?"

10 min CORE CONCEPTS

- Review the 4 key terms. Emphasize "Career Capital" as the key differentiator.
- Read the Background paragraph together.
- Quick check: Ask students for examples of jobs (fast food, retail) vs. careers (nursing, engineering, skilled trades).

25-30 min APPLY IT

- **Part A (10 min):** Individual or pairs. Check that students justify their "job vs. career" answers using growth, advancement, and skill development criteria.
- **Part B (10 min):** Financial calculations. Walk through the multiplication (wage \times 2,080 hours) if needed.
- **Part C (5-10 min):** Personal reflection. Encourage students to think realistically about careers that match their interests.

10 min CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- Complete in class or assign as homework.
- Review Q3 (Calculation) and Q5 (Reflection) to assess deeper understanding.

DIFFERENTIATION

Support

- Pre-teach vocabulary (Career Capital, Career Path) before starting.
- Walk through the Part B calculation on the board ($\$15.50 \times 2,080$).
- Pair students for Part A scenario analysis.
- For Part C, allow verbal responses instead of written.

Extension

- Research actual starting salaries for careers of interest using Bureau of Labor Statistics.
- Calculate lifetime earnings difference (40 years) between job and career paths.
- Interview a family member about their job vs. career experience.

ANSWER KEY

Part A: Job vs. Career Analysis

- 1. JOB.** Alex has no interest in advancement, takes no training, moves between unrelated positions, and sees minimal wage growth after 4 years.
- 2. CAREER.** Jordan is building skills through certifications, receiving promotions, getting employer-sponsored training, and has seen 40% salary growth in 3 years.
- 3. CAREER.** Sam is on a clear advancement path with leadership training, pursuing education with tuition support, and has a defined trajectory to store manager.

Part B: Financial Impact Comparison

Annual Salary Year 10:

Path A (Jobs): $\$15.50 \times 2,080 = \$32,240$

Path B (Career): $\$32.00 \times 2,080 = \$66,560$

Difference in Year 10:

$\$66,560 - \$32,240 = \$34,320$ more per year

- The career path earns **\$34,320 more per year** in Year 10.
- Career capital examples: specialized skills/certifications, professional network/connections, industry knowledge, leadership experience, reputation in the field, problem-solving expertise.
- Accept any two: (1) Health insurance/benefits, (2) Retirement plans (401k matching), (3) Paid time off/vacation, (4) Job security, (5) Professional development opportunities, (6) Tuition reimbursement.

Part C: Personal Application

Responses will vary. Look for: realistic career field identification, understanding of entry-level vs. advanced positions, and concrete action steps for building career capital (internships, certifications, education, networking).

Check Your Understanding

- B (Career capital)
- Jobs provide immediate income but limited growth potential; careers offer advancement opportunities, increasing compensation over time, and significantly higher lifetime earnings.
- Year 1: $\$18.00 \times 1.08 = \19.44 ; Year 2: $\$19.44 \times 1.08 = \21.00 ; Year 3: $\$21.00 \times 1.08 = \22.68 per hour
- Investing in education/training (short-term sacrifice) builds career capital that leads to higher long-term earnings, better benefits, and more opportunities—exactly what Maya experienced going from minimum wage to 3x her previous earnings.
- Reflection should include: specific career interests aligned with personal skills/values, and at least one concrete step (research, informational interview, coursework, job shadow, etc.).

COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

Misconception	Clarification
"A career requires a 4-year college degree."	Many careers build through certifications, apprenticeships, or community college programs (electricians, nurses, IT professionals). The key is intentional skill-building, not the specific path.
"Any job can become a career if you work hard enough."	While effort matters, careers require strategic planning and fields with advancement opportunities. Working hard at a dead-end job won't

	automatically create growth potential.
"You should only take jobs in your career field."	Early jobs don't need to be in your target field. They can build transferable skills (communication, responsibility) while you pursue education or training for your career path.