Dream Job Assignment

My dream job is to work in the cybersecurity department, specifically on the red team, at the NSA or in IT at SamTech. Since high school, I've been learning computer science, IT, and cybersecurity to reach these goals. While I considered the blue team—which focuses on defending a company’s systems from attacks and patching vulnerabilities—I decided against it because they’re almost always on-call. If an attack happens at 3 AM, they have to get up and rush to work, which isn’t something I’m interested in.

The red team, on the other hand, isn't always on-call. In this role, you work with your team to hack into systems or perform security assessments on employees and other staff, either at your own company or at other locations. You can also explore system vulnerabilities without worrying too much about the consequences since you're not dealing with your own company’s systems. I'm also drawn to cybersecurity because it’s a growing field, with over 3.5 million unfilled positions expected by 2025, and the pay is pretty good. My goal is to earn enough to live comfortably and support my significant other, family, and friends.

To qualify for this job, I believe I need a solid understanding of IT, including how to work with computer systems, group policies, antivirus software, and more. I started on this path by taking CIT 111, a dual-credit course at JCTC during high school, which helped me earn the TestOut PC Pro certification. My instructor said it's similar to the CompTIA A+ certification, though it's less known.

Beyond IT, I need to be skilled in programming languages like Python, Java, JavaScript, C, and C++. I'll be working on these skills through various courses at the University of Louisville (UofL). I've already earned IT Specialist certifications in Python and Java from my dual-credit classes at JCTC, though these are just introductory and not full professional certifications. I also need to improve my knowledge of networking, front-end and back-end development, and other areas of computer science.

To boost my cybersecurity skills, I can take elective courses in computer science and cybersecurity offered at UofL, along with some recommended criminal justice classes for those on a cybersecurity track. These include CJ 200 – Crime and Justice in the United States, CJ 305 – Criminal Behavior, CJ 306 – Criminal Procedure, and CJ 395 – Criminal Law and Evidence. In the future, I also plan to take courses in computer forensics, cryptography, networking, databases, operating system design, and more.