

Workbook Three

3

Essential Skills to Research Your Occupation





This workbook was created by Literacy Link South Central. We are a regional network in Ontario that provides support to literacy programs. We are a partner in the Employment Ontario system. This series of workbooks is the result of a project called, “Connecting Literacy and Employment through Essential Skills.” These resources have been developed for people who want to look for employment while strengthening their Essential Skills.

Thank you to our project partners for their help in creating these resources. Our partners for this project include:

- Elgin, Middlesex, Oxford, Workforce Planning and Development Board
- Goodwill Ontario Great Lakes
- Literacy London Inc.
- London Employment Help Centre
- Pathways Skill Development & Placement Centre

A special thanks to the employment agencies, literacy programs, employers and Essential Skills experts who participated in this project. Their feedback was valuable in the development of this workbook series.

Canada

This project was funded in part by the Government of Canada’s Office of Literacy and Essential Skills.

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Read this Part First

This workbook is for you if:

- You're looking for work.
- You have access to a computer with Internet.
- You feel comfortable using a computer and the Internet and you would like to practise and improve these skills.
- You want to build your Essential Skills.

This workbook is one in a series of seven titles:

1. Essential Skills to Identify the Job Searcher
2. Essential Skills to Identify the Job
3. **Essential Skills to Research Your Occupation**
4. Essential Skills to Search for Jobs
5. Essential Skills to Market Yourself with a Resume and Cover Letter
6. Essential Skills to Market Yourself at the Interview
7. Essential Skills to Maintain Employability

What are Essential Skills? Why are they important to you, the job seeker?

Essential Skills are the skills you need for work, learning and life. Knowing your Essential Skills helps you to tell employers what you can do for them. It shows people that you have the skills to learn, that you adapt to change and that you can work well with others. A good employee has strong Essential Skills. When you practise and improve your Essential Skills, you increase your chances of finding a job.

Why are these workbooks unique?

- These workbooks combine job search activities and Essential Skills resources. You can look for a job search and improve your Essential Skills – at the same time.
- You can photocopy or download the copies you need – they're free!
- The workbooks are self-paced. You can take as much time as you need and complete as many workbooks as you need.

How you will use Essential Skills for job search

You will find that you use your Essential Skills for all of the job search activities in these workbooks. When you begin to read the content, you will notice that activities requiring Essential Skills are identified with icons and tips. The icons tell you which Essential Skills you will be using. The tips tell you how you will use the Essential Skill for each activity.

Essential Skills Icon	What It Means
	Reading: Understanding materials written in sentences or paragraphs Example: Read a case study about job search.
	Document use: Using and understanding labels, graphs, signs and other similar materials Example: Fill in a chart of job search contact information
	Numeracy: Using and understanding numbers Example: Budget your monthly expenses.
	Writing: Writing text or typing on a computer Example: Write a thank you note after an interview.
	Oral communication: Using speech to share thoughts and information Example: Practise answering interview questions with others.

Essential Skills Icon	What It Means
	Working with others: Interacting with others to complete tasks Example: Help to improve one another's interview skills.
	Thinking: Reviewing information to make decisions Example: Analyze how you spend your time during your job search.
	Computer use: Using computers and other technical tools Example: Use the Internet for research.
	Continuous learning: Participating in an ongoing process of gaining skills and knowledge Example: Learn to maintain a positive attitude during job search.

Computer Skills

As you work through the workbooks you will be practising your computer skills. You must have some basic computer skills in order to complete many of the workbook activities.

Can you do the following?

- **Use a mouse.** Can you open links by clicking on them? Can you double click on files?
- **Use a keyboard.** Can you type? Can you type in a web address? Do you know how to use command keys like Shift and Control?
- **Search the Internet.** Can you use a search engine like Google or Internet Explorer Can you use key words to find a specific topic?
- **Search a website.** Can you use the menus, links and tabs to find your way on a website?
- **Watch an online video.** Can you open, play and pause a video? Can you adjust the sound?

If you are unable to perform these computer functions, you may wish to take some basic computer training before you use the workbooks.



Tips for making the workbooks work for you

These workbooks have been designed for job seekers who want to look for work and improve their Essential Skills.

Here are some tips to help you get the most out of each workbook.

- ✓ Use the Essential Skills Checklist before and after you complete each workbook to see how your Essential Skills improve.
- ✓ Read the Job Search Terms so that you are familiar with the terms used in each workbook.
- ✓ For best results, work through all the workbooks. They follow the steps you'll take when looking for a job. But if you don't need the information in every workbook, you can just choose the ones with the content that is right for you.
- ✓ Try to work through the whole workbook and not just sections. This will increase your understanding of the content and help you practise your Essential Skills.
- ✓ These workbooks have been designed for clients in both employment and literacy agencies. If you get stuck, ask for help.
- ✓ As much as possible, work with your colleagues (other jobs searchers in your program). You will practise your Essential Skills when you share information and ideas.
- ✓ Remember that these are your workbooks. This means that you can write in them, underline, highlight, make notes – anything that helps you to learn and get ready for work.

Improving your Essential Skills increases your chances of finding work. Good luck with your job search!

Research Your Occupation!



Workbook Three

Look before you leap. (Author Unknown)

Labour market information gives you important facts and insights that you may need to know before you commit to a specific job or occupation. Labour market information:

- Helps you to make informed decisions about careers, education, employment and business plans.
- Provides valuable insights into regional or community labour market conditions and trends.
- Helps you to discover where the jobs are and which occupations have the best prospects.
- Helps you to locate appropriate training and educational resources.

Labour market research can help you find the job you are looking for by providing information on trends, training, wages and employers.

In this workbook you will:

- Learn about the benefits of labour market research
- Research labour market information online
- Explore Workforce Planning Ontario and your area's local board
- Research labour market information about the job(s) of your choice
- Assess the conditions and trends for your career choice
- Research employers
- Prepare for an informational interview
- Find employment and training for your career choice

These activities will help you to take advantage of labour market information for your career. When you learn to find and use labour market information, you are learning a valuable tool for career-long choices.



Using Your Essential Skills for a Job Search

One of the benefits of using this workbook series is that as you prepare for employment, you also practise your Essential Skills. Essential Skills are the skills that enable you to carry out life and work tasks, including your job search. Practising and improving your Essential Skills will improve your job search techniques and materials and increase your chances of finding the work that you want.

In Workbook Three you will use the following Essential Skills:

- Reading
- Document Use
- Writing
- Numeracy
- Oral Communication
- Thinking
- Working with Others
- Computer Use



You can evaluate your confidence and progress in using these skills by assessing yourself before and after you complete this workbook. Your self-assessment can show you the skills you feel confident in using and the skills you need to practise more. This is important information for your job search and your success as an employee.

1. Take a few moments to complete the self-assessment on page 11 before you begin the workbook activities. Assess your Essential Skills in the **Before** column.
2. As you work through the activities, notice the icons and tips that help you to focus on particular Essential Skills.
3. When you have completed the workbook, return to the Essential Skills Checklist. You will be able to measure your improved job search abilities using Essential Skills by putting check marks in the **After** column.

Job Search Terms

Term	Definition
NOC	NOC stands for National Occupational Classification. The National Occupational Classification is the national reference database about occupations in Canada.
Labour market	Employers offer jobs or work. Employees offer skills. Together they work for each other's benefit. Along with economic conditions and other factors, they make up the labour market.
Occupational profile	This is a complete description of a specific job including: main duties, average wages, skill requirements and outlook for job openings.
Employment prospects	This tells you about projected job availability for a specific occupation.
Informational interview	This is an interview for gathering information about a specific job or workplace.

Essential Skills Checklist



Use this Essential Skills Checklist to rate your increased confidence in using Essential Skills. Before you start the activities in this workbook, fill in the **Before** column. When you have finished the workbook, fill in the **After** column. Have your Essential Skills improved? Knowing what you do well can be important information to share when applying for jobs. Knowing what you still need to work on will help you to prepare for future job search success.

Using Essential Skills for Job Search	I'm not sure if I can do this.		I can't do this yet.		I can do this with help.		I can do this.	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
Using Reading Skills I am able to:								
• Read about the benefits of labour market research to improve my understanding								
• Find and read a definition of 'labour market' to improve my understanding (Activity 1)								
• Read two case studies that reflect on the importance of labour market research								
• Read and understand written instructions for searching labour market information online (Activity 2,3)								
• Read to analyze and integrate information from several sources to aid labour market research								
• Read descriptive information about occupations online to help with my occupation choice (Activity 5)								
• Read an online report that gives labour market information about the occupation of my choice (Activity 7,9)								

Using Essential Skills for Job Search	I'm not sure if I can do this.		I can't do this yet.		I can do this with help.		I can do this.	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
Read about informational interviews to prepare for an interview activity								
Using Document Skills I am able to:								
Search through online documents to read about occupation and labour market information (Activity 5,6)								
Using Numeracy (Math Skills) I am able to:								
Decide whether or not there are likely to be more job openings or job seekers for my chosen occupation (Activity 10)								
Make calculations to decide which job is a better financial choice								
Using Writing Skills I am able to:								
Record information from local board's website (Activity 4)								
Make notes on labour market information found online (Activity 7,9)								
Make notes on labour market information to use in a discussion (Activity 11)								
Make notes on an occupation, based on labour market research (Activity 12)								

Using Essential Skills for Job Search	I'm not sure if I can do this.		I can't do this yet.		I can do this with help.		I can do this.	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
Using Oral Communication I am able to:								
• Present and discuss job search and labour market information (Activity 11)								
• Conduct an informational interview (Activity 14)								
Working with Others I am able to:								
• Conduct an informational interview and ask for feedback (Activity 14)								
Using Thinking Skills I am able to:								
• Make a decision about which job is a better financial choice								
• Decide whether or not an occupation is a good choice based on labour market research (Activity 12)								
• Find information on a local employer (Activity 13)								
Using Computer Skills I am able to:								
• Do an Internet search using key words (Activity 1)								
• Do Internet research on labour market information (Activity 2,3,4)								
• Use youtube.com to learn more about my local board (Activity 4)								
• Navigate a website to find occupational and labour market information (Activity 5,6)								

Part One – Online Labour Market Research

It is important that you find out what types of jobs are in demand now and in the future. This information will be extremely useful in your career planning. It will help you discover if your career goals tie in with labour market demand, or if you need to adjust them. Study the job market, and compare your interests and aspirations to what is available.

(From: Life Events-Looking for a Job www.ontario.ca/en/life_events/job)

The Benefits of Labour Market Research



Essential Skills Tip: Reading

- Read about the benefits of labour market research

Labour Market Defined

Labour market is one of those phrases that gets used a lot to cover many different situations. The definition of labour market is actually pretty simple:

Employers offer jobs or work. Employees offer skills. Together they work for each other's benefit. Along with economic conditions and other factors, they make up the **labour market**. (Source: www.immigranttoolbox.ca)

Why is it important to know labour market information?

Labour market information can:

Help you to stay on top of your career strategy. A generation or more ago, it was common for workers to stay in the same job, often at the same workplace, until they retired. There wasn't much moving around and employment was relatively stable. Now the employment scene is very different, and a worker can expect several changes in jobs and careers.

Help you discover where the jobs are and the future labour needs for your chosen work.

When you are making a career change or considering further training and education, you will want to make sure that there are positions available in your chosen career.

Help you discover what employers are paying. If you are making a career move or a move to another location, labour market information allows you to research pay ranges for jobs in different areas of the province and country.

Help you to learn what employers are looking for in their employees. Discover the skills, experience and training that employers want in their future employees.

Help you to research and learn about the employer. This is a good practice because employers like to know that you are informed about their business or industry.

A short amount of time invested now in labour market research can benefit you in your job search.

While there are many local sources of labour market information, a good place to begin your research is the Internet. As is often the case, the Internet can save you time and steps by giving you a clearer picture of the information you need to know. You will be exploring labour market information in the next section of this workbook.



Activity One: Understand the Term “Labour Market”



Essential Skills Tip: Reading, Computer Use

- Find and read a definition of ‘labour market’ to improve your understanding
- Do an Internet search using key words



Find another definition of **labour market**.

Go to the Internet and type “definition of labour market” into your search engine. Click on a few of the entries to read their definitions. Write one below that helps you understand and use the term **labour market**.

A word about labour...

Labour is one of those words, like colour and neighbour, that is spelled differently in Canada and in the United States. In the United States the same word is spelled labor. When you enter the correct Canadian spelling into your search engine, you will access Canadian content on the web. If you use the American spelling, you may end up on an American website that quotes statistics from the United States. When you use American spelling, you may not find information about the Canadian labour market.

On the Internet you will find both federal and provincial information about labour markets. Of course you will be most interested in your local labour market or the labour market where you would like to work. Many people move across the country every year in search of work in their particular field. For this reason it is a good idea to be familiar with how to access labour information from across Canada.

Case Study: Part One



Essential Skills Tip: Reading

- Read a case study to reflect on the importance of labour market research

Don had lived and worked in Mississauga for over 15 years. Now he and his wife, Laura, were considering a move to London, Ontario. Don's parents were living in London, and just recently, his father had had a stroke. Don wanted to live closer to his parents. At the same time, he needed to find a job before he and Laura moved.

Don wanted to find some information about the employment situation in London. He decided that he would do some online research.

It wasn't long before Don found some useful websites. He was able to learn about the labour market in London. He was also able to learn that there were several businesses in London similar to the one he worked for in Mississauga.

After Don had done some labour market research online he felt more positive about a possible move to London. He knew that there were jobs available in his field, and he felt confident in his ability to find work.

In Activities Two and Three you will explore the Government of Canada's Labour Market Information website. Using a website is a great way to learn about labour markets across Canada – right from your own desk!

Activity Two: Begin Online Labour Market Research



Essential Skills Tip: Reading, Computer Use

- Read and understand written instructions for searching labour market information online
- Do Internet research on labour market information



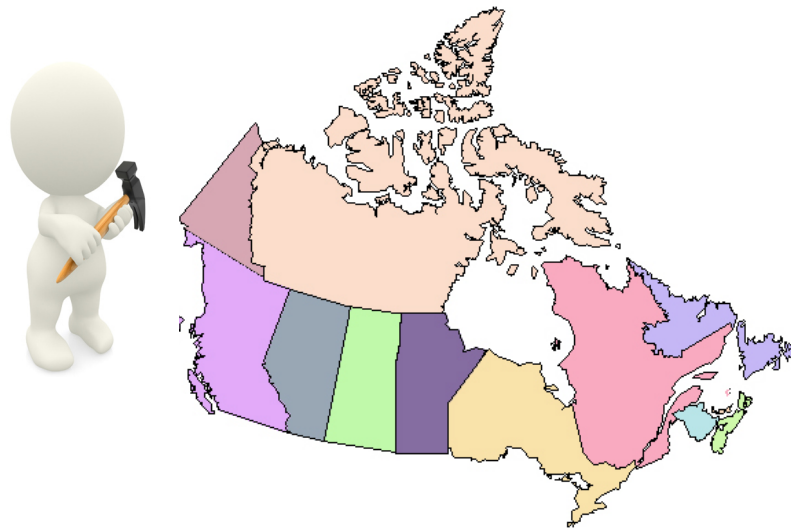
Go to Labour Market Information (LMI) at www.labourmarketinformation.ca. Click on English.

Click on the link that says **Having trouble finding work?** Read the tips given by LMI.

What information will you find under **Who Hires?**

What kind of information will you find in the **NewsFlash** section?

What kind of information will you find under **Employment Prospects**?



Activity Three: Search for Employers Online



Essential Skills Tip: Computer Use

- Do Internet research on labour market information

1. Go to Labour Market Information (LMI) at www.labourmarketinformation.ca/ and click on English.
2. In the blue menu on the left side of the page click on **Potential Employers**.
3. Follow the search instructions.
4. Locate your province in the drop-down menu. Click on it and then click **GO**.
5. In the next box, choose your area.
6. You will need to fill in the **Search by** box next. Choose from:

Occupation Title	This means the job title that you are looking for.
Occupations where content is available	This means any job available in the geographical area you have chosen.
National Occupational Classification Code	This means your job's NOC code.
Job Type	This means a general description of the job you are searching for.

7. If you know your job's NOC code, choose that option. Otherwise, choose **Occupation Title** or **Job Type**.
8. In the **Search for** box, type in your NOC code, occupation title, or job type.
9. Click **Search**.

The screenshot shows the Labour Market Information website. At the top, there is a header with the Canadian flag, the text 'Human Resources and Skills Development Canada / Ressources humaines et Développement des compétences Canada', and the 'Canada' logo. Below this is a navigation bar with links: Français, Home, Contact Us, Help, Search, and canada.gc.ca. A sidebar on the left lists 'LMI Options' including NewsFlash, Build Your Occupational Profile, Job Descriptions, Job and Skill Requirements, Employment Prospects, Wages & Salaries, Potential Employers, Where to Get Training, About the Local Labour Market, Industrial Profiles, Other Resources, Glossary, and Proactive Disclosure. The main content area is titled 'Potential Employers' and contains a search section. The search section explains that the list is for potential employers in local communities across Canada. It includes a 'Search:' heading and instructions to fill in search boxes. The current Province or Territory selected is Ontario. There is a dropdown for 'Province or Territory' set to Ontario and a 'Go' button. There is also a dropdown for 'Area' with the text 'Please select a Geographic Area'. The 'Search by:' section has a dropdown menu with options: 'Occupation Title', 'Occupations where content is available', 'National Occupational Classification (NOC) Code' (which is highlighted), and 'Job Type'. Below this is a 'Search for:' text input field. At the bottom of the search section are 'Search' and 'Reset' buttons.

10. List up to three potential employers here:

Activity Four: Find and Research Your Local Workforce Planning Board



Essential Skills Tip: Writing, Computer Use

- Record information from the Workforce Planning Ontario website
- Do Internet research on labour market information
- Use YouTube to learn more about local boards

Labour is both a federal and a provincial concern. Therefore, the provincial government also posts labour market information on the Internet. Ontario has a province-wide Workforce Planning Board network. What is a Workforce Planning Board? The description below is taken from Workforce Planning Ontario, the Workforce Planning Board website.



A Network of Local Boards

There are 25 workforce development areas in communities across Ontario. These boards conduct localized research and actively engage organizations and community partners in local labour market projects.

Each board is as individual as the community it serves, and each addresses labour market issues in its own way as all communities have their own priorities. As a network, Ontario's local boards also work together to address labour market issues from a province-wide perspective. (From www.workforceplanningontario.ca)

1. Search YouTube for the Workforce Planning Ontario video and watch it. Go to www.youtube.com and enter **Workforce Planning Ontario** into the search box.
2. Each local board has its own website. Go to www.workforceplanningontario.ca and click on **Welcome**. Notice the menu on the left side of the web page says **Local Board Areas**. This menu lists all of the local boards in Ontario.
3. Try clicking on the local board for **Niagara**, under **West**. Niagara includes Labour Market Data on their home page. What is the current unemployment rate in St. Catharines? _____
What is the current unemployment rate in Ontario? _____
4. Find your local labour market by finding your area in the menu on the left. Click on your local board area.
5. What is the name of your local board? _____
6. Spend some time exploring your local board's website. Most local boards have a **links** tab to click on that will connect you to local job search resources. List two or three of those resources below.

Local boards do not directly assist you in finding employment, nor do they offer training programs. Local boards are a good resource for connecting you to local employment agencies, government agencies and career information to help you find the job you want. For example, your local board may link to www.iwin.on.ca, the Individual WorkinfoNet website for Ontario. This site can help you find training and job opportunities in your community. Through your local workforce planning board you can contact Employment Ontario organizations that can help you succeed in your job search.

Explore Working in Canada

Working in Canada is another website that includes valuable labour market information. At Working in Canada you can learn about conditions and trends for your career choice. Working in Canada gives you information on earnings, rates of unemployment and work prospects. If you are thinking of changing careers or investing in more training, you may want to explore **WorkinginCanada.gc.ca** to help you decide whether or not your career choice has a good future.

In activities five to nine you will be working on the Working in Canada website. You may wish to save it in your web browser's bookmarks bar or favourites so that you can access it quickly and easily.

Before you begin the activities, go to www.WorkinginCanada.gc.ca

Watch the short video by clicking on the **Spotlight Video** icon. This video gives a short orientation to the Working in Canada tool.



Activity Five: Explore the Working in Canada Website



Essential Skills Tip: Reading, Document Use, Computer Use

- Read descriptive information about occupations online to help with your occupation choice
- Search through online documents to read about occupation and labour market information
- Navigate a website to find occupational and labour market information

1. Go to www.WorkinginCanada.gc.ca. Enter an **occupational title** of your choice in the Working in Canada Tool and then click **Search**.



Need more help in choosing an occupation? Explore the National Occupational Classification (NOC) website and do the activities in **Workbook Two**.

2. Click on the **Occupational Group** that matches your career choice. Notice that if you want to, you can refer to the NOC codes on the right side of the webpage.
3. Read the **Occupation Selection** information about your choice. If you think that the selection describes your occupation, you can click on **Continue**. If not, you can click on **Search Again**.

Continue to browse occupational groups until you find one that describes your occupation. Click on **Continue**.

Record your occupation title here:

Occupation:

Activity Six: Locate the Area Where You Plan to Work



Essential Skills Tip: Document Use, Computer Use

- Search through online documents to read about occupation and labour market information
- Navigate a website to find occupational and labour market information

Go to www.WorkinginCanada.gc.ca and return to the occupation you just chose.

Choose a **location** by selecting a province. You can use the map or the list of provinces on the left side of the page.

Select an **area** on the next page. Choose an area where you plan to live and work.

Note your province and area below:

Province and area:



Activity Seven: Make Note of Job Duties



Essential Skills Tip: Reading, Writing

- Read an online report that gives labour market information about the occupation of your choice
- Make notes on labour market information found online

Go to www.WorkinginCanada.gc.ca and return to the **province** and **area** you have chosen for work. After you click on the **area** you have chosen, you will arrive at a page titled **Working in Canada Report**. You will notice a number of coloured icons on this page. You can click on each of these icons for labour market information about your occupation.

Click on the purple **Main Duties** icon.



Make a note of the job duties for your chosen occupation below:

Job duties:

Are these the job duties that you expect in this occupation?

Do you think that you could perform these duties? Why or why not?



Activity Eight: Discover Your Wage Range



Essential Skills Tip: Numeracy

- Compare a range of wages

Go to www.WorkinginCanada.gc.ca and return to the **province** and **area** that you have chosen for work. After you click on the **area** you have chosen, you will arrive at a page titled Working in Canada Report.

Click on the green **Wages** icon.



This page describes local information on wage rates.

Wage Information for Your Occupation
Low Wage (\$/hour)
Average Wage (\$/hour)
High Wage (\$/hour)

Is this the wage range you would expect for this occupation? _____



Activity Nine: Learn the Employment Requirements for Your Occupation



Essential Skills Tip: Reading, Writing

- Read an online report that gives labour market information about the occupation of your choice
- Make notes on labour market information found online

Go to www.WorkinginCanada.gc.ca and return to the **province** and **area** that you have chosen for work. After you click on the **area** you have chosen, you will arrive at a page titled **Working in Canada Report**.

Click on the **Job & Skills Requirements** icon.



Read the **Employment Requirements** for your occupation. Make a note of the requirements below:

Employment Requirements

Read the **Skills Requirements** for your occupation. Make a note of the skill requirements below:

Skills Requirements

Scroll down the page to **Essential Skills**. This section lists the most important Essential Skills for your occupation. List them here:

Most Important Essential Skills for Your Occupation



Activity Ten: Learn the Outlooks and Prospects for Your Occupation



Essential Skills Tip: Numeracy (Analyze Data)

- Decide whether or not there are likely to be more job openings or job seekers for your chosen occupation

Go to www.WorkinginCanada.gc.ca and return to the **province** and **area** that you have chosen for work. After you click on the **area** you have chosen, you will arrive at a page titled **Working in Canada Report**.

Click on the **Outlook and Prospects** icon.



Scroll down until you see content similar to this:

Projection of Job Openings vs, Job Seekers

Category	Openings	%
Expansion Demand	1,439	4%
Retirements	27,155	84%
Deaths	2,305	7%
Emigration	1,512	5%
Project Job Openings	32,411	100%
Category	Seekers	%

Category	Seekers	%
School Leavers	17,231	69%
Immigration	3,700	15%
Net Mobility	3,985	16%
Projected Job Seekers	24,916	100%

The first part of this table (or one similar to it for your occupation) shows the projected job openings until 2018. The second part shows the projected number of job seekers until 2018.

Refer to the **Projection of Job Openings vs Job Seekers** table in the report for your occupation.

1. What is the projected number of job openings for your occupation? _____
2. What is the projected number of job seekers? _____
3. Are there more jobs or more job seekers?
 More jobs _____
 More job seekers _____
4. Based on this information, do you think that your job prospects are good until 2018? Why or why not?

Activity Eleven: Discuss Your Research with a Colleague



Essential Skills Tip: Writing, Oral Communication

- Make notes on labour market information to use in a discussion
- Present and discuss job search and labour market information



Discuss your research with a job search colleague. Use the information you have gathered from the Working in Canada website in your discussion:

NOC Code and Occupation Title:
Main duties at work:
Skill requirements for this occupation:
Job prospects:
Other important facts:

Activity Twelve: Decide Whether or Not Your Occupation is a Good Choice



Essential Skills Tip: Writing, Thinking (Decision Making)

- Make notes on an occupation, based on labour market research
- Decide whether or not an occupation is a good choice based on labour market research

Based on your research, do you think that this occupation is a good choice for you? Explain why or why not. Be sure to include some information about work prospects and earnings as well as any other information that has helped you to decide whether or not to pursue this occupation.

(If you think that the prospects for your chosen occupation are not good, then you may wish to repeat Activities Five through Nine with a second or third occupation title.)

Is this occupation a good choice for you?
Work prospects:
Earnings:
Notes:

Part Two - Explore Your Local Labour Market

Labour market information is not only available on the web. Local employment centres, libraries, government offices, your Chamber of Commerce and even the Yellow Pages will all have useful information about the local labour market.



Essential Skills Tip: Reading

- Read a case study to reflect on the importance of labour market research

Case Study: Part Two

Laura was busy unpacking boxes in her new townhouse. She and her husband Don had left their Mississauga home where they had lived for 15 years and moved to London, Ontario. Don had a new job, and he had started work the Monday after their move. Laura had quit her job at the Windy Willows Nursing Home in Mississauga where she had worked as a nursing home attendant. Now as she unpacked Laura wondered where she would be working next.

Laura knew that nursing homes were always looking for dependable attendants. Laura enjoyed her work. She liked working with elderly people, and she had a cheerful personality that the nursing home guests had really appreciated.

At the same time, Laura thought that she might enjoy a change, so she was also considering work as a nurse aide. Nursing home attendants and nurse aides use similar skills. These occupations share the same NOC code, 3413, so Laura thought that she might like to apply at one of London's hospitals.

Laura decided that she needed to do some research before she began applying for work. She wanted a job that she could walk to or get to by public transit. She did not want to take a drop in pay from what she had earned at Windy Willows. As well, she wanted full-time hours.

Laura decided to use a city transit map and the Yellow Pages to help her with her labour market research. She looked up nursing homes and hospitals. She discovered that the hospital and one nursing home were on direct transit routes where she would only need to take one bus. There was also one nursing home within walking distance of her home.

Questions



Essential Skills Tip: Numeracy (Make Calculations) **Thinking** (Make a Decision)

- Make calculations to decide which job is a better financial choice
- Make a decision about which job is a better financial choice

What factors are important to Laura as she decides where she will look for work?

Laura narrowed her choices to the hospital on the bus route and the nursing home within walking distance. The hospital pays 60 cents more per hour than the nursing home. A city bus pass costs \$85.00 per month. Assuming that both jobs are full time and average 176 working hours per month, which is the better financial choice for Laura?

Calculate how much more the hospital pays each month than the nursing home.

Multiply $.60 \times 176 =$ _____

If Laura works at the hospital, she will need to purchase a monthly bus pass for \$85.00.

Does the extra amount of money that Laura would earn at the hospital cover the cost of the bus pass? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Which is the better financial choice?

___ A The hospital job that requires a bus pass.

___ B The nursing home job that Laura can walk to.

Activity Thirteen: Use Local Sources of Information



In Activity Three on page 20, you developed a list of potential employers in your region. Use a local labour market resource to find out more about one of these employers. Try researching the employer at a local employment centre, the library, your Chamber of Commerce, or your local workforce planning board.

Find out information like:

- The address
- The website
- Products or services
- The size of the business or institution
- The number of employees
- Years in business

You may not be able to find all of this information, but find as much as you can.

Employer:
Employer address:
Employer website:
Products or services provided by the employer:
Size of business:
Number of employees:
Years in business:
Other interesting facts:

Informational Interviews



Essential Skills Tip: Reading

- Read a case study about performing an informational interview
- Read information on informational interviews to prepare for an interview activity

The purpose of an informational interview is to learn about an occupation from someone who has firsthand knowledge. It is not an interview for a position, but it can help you with your career options. An informational interview is also useful for researching companies where you may want to work. It can be a formal or informal conversation that helps you decide on your next job search steps.

Case Study: Part Three

Laura thought that she would like to apply to work at the hospital, but before she did, she wanted to speak with someone who actually worked there as a nurse aide. Laura did not know anyone personally, but this did not stop her. She chatted with her neighbours and with the cashiers at the grocery store. She asked members of her church and finally found someone whose sister, Marissa, worked in the hospital as a nurse aide. Laura called her one evening and asked if Marissa had time to talk with her about her work at the hospital. Laura offered to meet her after work, and Marissa agreed. Laura prepared some questions ahead of time. In particular, she wanted to learn more about the duties and responsibilities of a nurse aid in a hospital. She also wanted to know about how workers got along with one another. Laura found that it made a big difference to her job satisfaction when she got along with the people she worked with.

Other workers are a great source of knowledge about jobs. You can ask them questions about occupations that interest you and get up-to-the-minute labour market information. The informational interview has become a popular and valuable job search tool.

Benefits of the Informational Interview

(Adapted from www.quintcareers.com/information_results.html)

- You gather information about your occupation and the skills needed to do that job. You can see how you might fit into that workplace setting.
- You have the opportunity to make personal contacts among people who do the hiring or who may be able to influence the hiring.
- You gain insight and access into the hidden job market (jobs that are not advertised).
- You become aware of the needs of the employers. You can learn what happens on the job in your specific labour market. Employers will appreciate that you have used your initiative to gain inside knowledge of their business.
- You gain confidence in talking with people while learning what you need to know. Informational interviews provide an opportunity to meet with employers before the more stressful job interview.

Quintessential Careers offers an online tutorial on informational interviews at:

www.quintcareers.com/informational_interviewing

How To Prepare for an Informational Interview

Read through this section on informational interviews. You will have the opportunity to practise an informational interview in the next activity.

1. Find an employer

Find a worker who is already employed in the occupation that interests you. You may know this person as a friend or a friend of a friend or family member. If you can't find a personal contact, you can phone the employer. When you make it clear that you are seeking information and not a position, employers are often very helpful.

If you need help finding an employer, you may choose to return to Activity Three on page 20. As well, you can find employers through your local board or through the Working in Canada website. Follow the instructions in Activity Ten (page 32). Under the **Outlooks and Prospects** icon, search for **Local Employment Potential Information**.

Remember you collected information in Activity 13 page 38 that may be useful.

2. Prepare for the meeting

Take time to do some labour market research about the business or industry. Employers appreciate when you know something about them. This research may also help you to develop your questions. Your local board and Chamber of Commerce are good sources of information. Check to see if the business has its own website.

Prepare your questions ahead of time. If you search **Informational Interview Questions** on the Internet, you will get hundreds of hits. Use some of the questions you find and some from the list on the next page to get you started. At the same time, you may have a few questions unique to your particular interests and industry that you wish to ask.

3. Contact the employer

When you contact this person, be very clear that you are requesting information, not a job. Ask for 15 minutes of his or her time and stick to this guideline. Even if you feel that the interview is going well and you have more questions to ask, the employer will appreciate your consideration of their time.

Sixteen Informational Interview Questions

Questions for Workers

1. Can you tell me about a typical day on the job?
2. How did you get started doing this type of work?
3. What qualifications and experience did you need?
4. What skills and abilities are necessary for performing this work?
5. What do you like most about your job?
6. What do you like the least about your job?
7. What do you see as the best opportunities for someone working in this field?
8. What is the typical starting wage for someone in this line of work?
9. What advice would you give to someone who is looking for a similar job in this industry?



Questions for Employers

10. How do you see this industry developing in the future? How is your industry changing?
11. What are the necessary requirements for an entry-level position in this industry?
12. What are employers typically looking for when hiring people in this line of work?
13. How do my qualifications and experience compare with employers' expectations for this industry?
14. Where do you usually post your job openings?
15. May I have your business card? (The business card will give you all of the information needed to contact this person in the future and correctly address your thank you note.)
16. Can you suggest anyone else I might talk to about this position? May I use your name when I contact that person? (When you mention your contact's name to the next person, your next interview will be much easier to arrange.)

A few more informational interview tips

- Take a notebook with you and make notes. Information on job duties as well as qualifications, skills and experience is valuable for any future job applications in this occupation.
- Ask your most important questions first, just in case you run out of time.
- Dress for the informational interview as you would for a job interview.
- Remember that you are the one doing the interviewing, so it is up to you to keep the conversation going.



No matter how well the interview goes, do not ask for a job! The employer may feel that you have taken advantage of his or her trust. Instead, you can follow up with a job application at a later date. **More about job applications in Workbook Four.**

- Send a thank you card or letter within one to three days of the informational interview. This communication is a good way to keep in touch, to show your gratitude and to be remembered by people.

Activity Fourteen: Conduct an Informational Interview



Essential Skills Tip: Writing, Oral Communication, Working with Others

- Make notes to prepare for an informational interview
- Conduct an informational interview with a family member, friend or colleague and ask for feedback
- Conduct an informational interview

You can practise your interview skills ahead of time so that you are polished and ready for the real thing.

Choose a friend, family member or job search colleague who has or has had a job. Try and choose someone who has a job that you are interested in. It doesn't have to be a job you want to apply for. Remember that you are just practising.

1. Prepare your questions in written form.
2. Be prepared to listen and take notes.
3. When you have finished, thank the interviewee. Follow up with a thank you note.
4. If possible have another colleague or friend watch the interview to offer helpful feedback. You will want to know what you are doing right and what needs more work.



Conclusion



In this workbook you have explored the labour market in ways that help you make better choices about your future occupation. In **Workbook Four** you will be searching the labour market for places of employment.



Remember to Check Your Skills

Take time to return to page 11 and fill in the Essential Skills Checklist. This checklist can help you keep track of the Essential Skills you use well and those that you have improved. It can also help you to highlight those skills that need more work and practice.

Essential Skills for Job Search Success

Workbook titles in this series include:

1. Essential Skills to Identify the Job Searcher
2. Essential Skills to Identify the Job
- 3. Essential Skills to Research Your Occupation**
4. Essential Skills to Search for Jobs
5. Essential Skills to Market Yourself with a Resume and Cover Letter
6. Essential Skills to Market Yourself at the Interview
7. Essential Skills to Maintain Employability



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