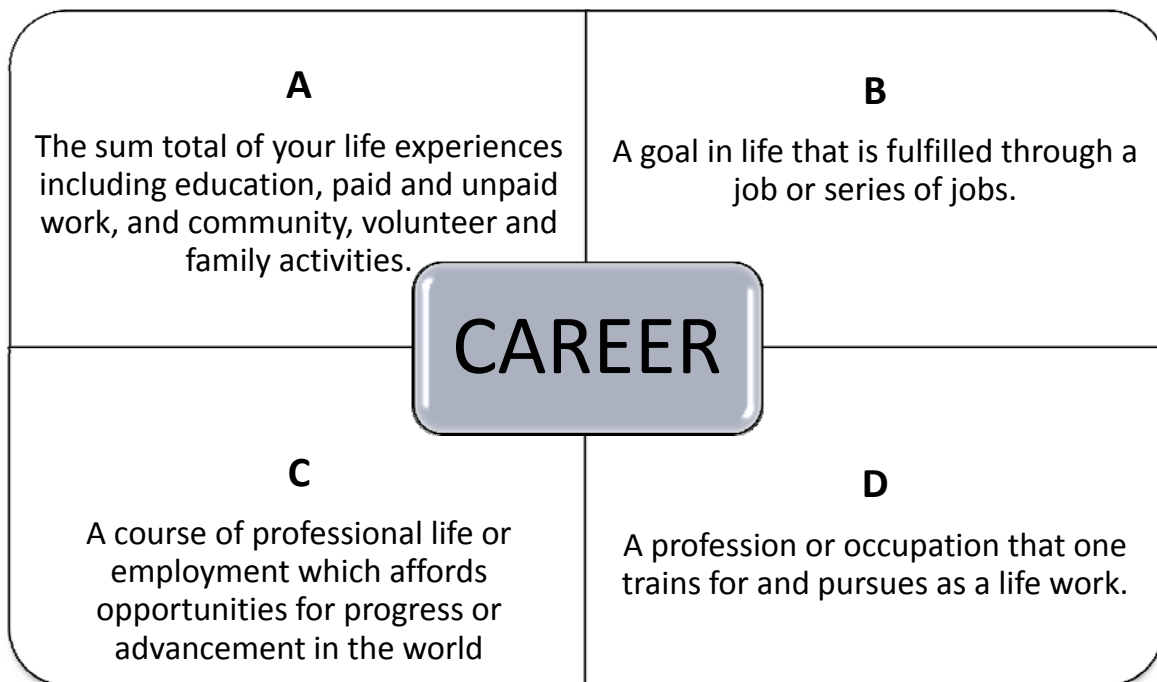


Read the four definitions given below for the word 'career'. They are similar but there are also some differences between them. Use the grid below to help you work out which definition is closest to your idea of a career.



Look at each column. The first one asks you to decide which of the definitions, A or B, is closest to your idea of a career. You don't have to agree wholly with the statement, just choose which one you think is either a bit or a lot better than the other one. Highlight or circle your preference.

Choose A or B	Choose A or C	Choose A or D	Choose B or C	Choose B or D	Choose C or D
A	A	A	B	A	A
B	C	D	C	C	C

Now add up how many As, Bs, Cs and Ds you scored. Which one did you get most of? That is your preferred definition. How does this compare with other people in your group or class?

What does the word 'career' mean to you?

Read what 9 real people had to say, and make a note of the key words, as shown in the first example.

Air Cabin Crew

I think it's a job that you would like to do, a career, somewhere where you see yourself working – yeah, and the job that you enjoy doing, and maybe that's got chances of progressing up in that career, like promotion, or a chance of getting more money, but at the end of the day I think it's got to be a job that you enjoy doing.

Key Words

*Enjoy...chances...progressing...
promotion...money*

Business Author

To me the word career has as much meaning as the word farthing or shilling – it's a currency which has been out-moded by – by circumstances... it doesn't describe the world which is recognisable to people who are leaving school now or who are leaving university now. Young people know it's nonsense, they know they have to be a bit more entrepreneurial, a bit more street traderish almost in mentality to get by.

Key Words

Buyer

Career – a successful path that you take to doing work and earning money.

Key Words

Dentist

Career to me is what I do as a job and what I do to earn money for myself and my family.

Key Words

Hairdresser

I would personally say that that meant what I wanted to do with my life and how I wanted to get into a certain business.

Key Words

I.T. Consultant

I always think about career as a kind of a retrospective thing, it's like the jobs you ended up doing whilst you were thinking about what you wanted to do, heh-heh, but I suppose in a simple sense, yeah, it's the idea of the things you want to do based on what you're really passionate about and ideally, if you're lucky, your career is filled with, you know, definite decisions of things you wanted to do as opposed to things you ended up doing.

Key Words

Nurse

Career is a job that I can do, for me, for the rest of my life, a chosen path that I'm going to take.

Key Words

Radio presenter

For me career is something with a sense of progression, and something that I would actually engage in as well and have a passion, and something that I could actually sort of see that I could be progressing along, throughout my life really.

Key Words

Teacher

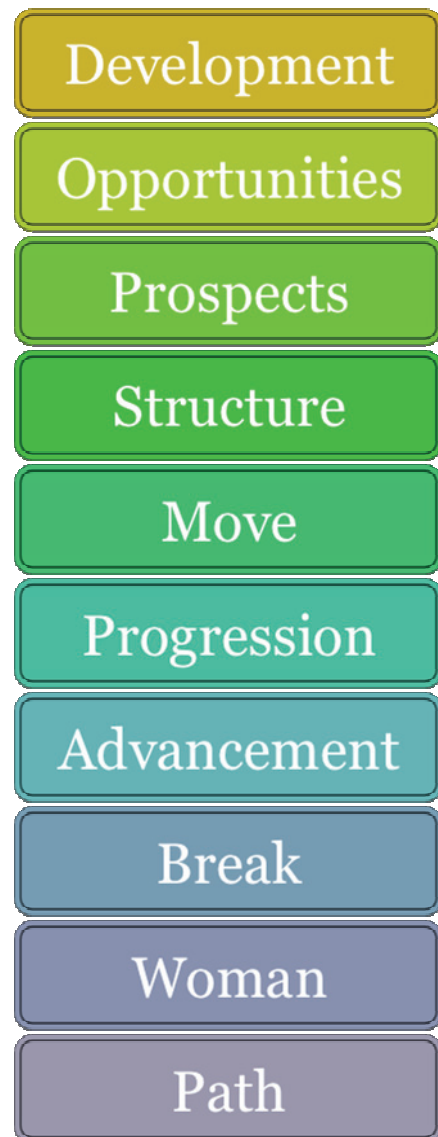
When I was younger the word career meant something that very academic people went into, something for middle class people perhaps... a career was something that you had to have a lot of experience to get into it, you needed to go to university and when you got into a career it was something in which you could progress, and also the word career for me was synonymous with more money I suppose.

Key Words

Phrase builder

These are the Top Ten nouns which go with 'career' to form common noun phrases.

Through dictionary work and discussion, and/or by interviewing adults, the task here is to move beyond the single word 'career', and to explore what phrases such as 'career structure' or 'career break' mean.



Interviews

Listen to the telephone interviews with a variety of adults about their careers.

These are provided as the basis for further thinking, and/or as a model for conducting further interviews. The aim is for students to deepen their understanding of what the word 'career' means in real contexts of work.

The questions used are on the Extensions page.

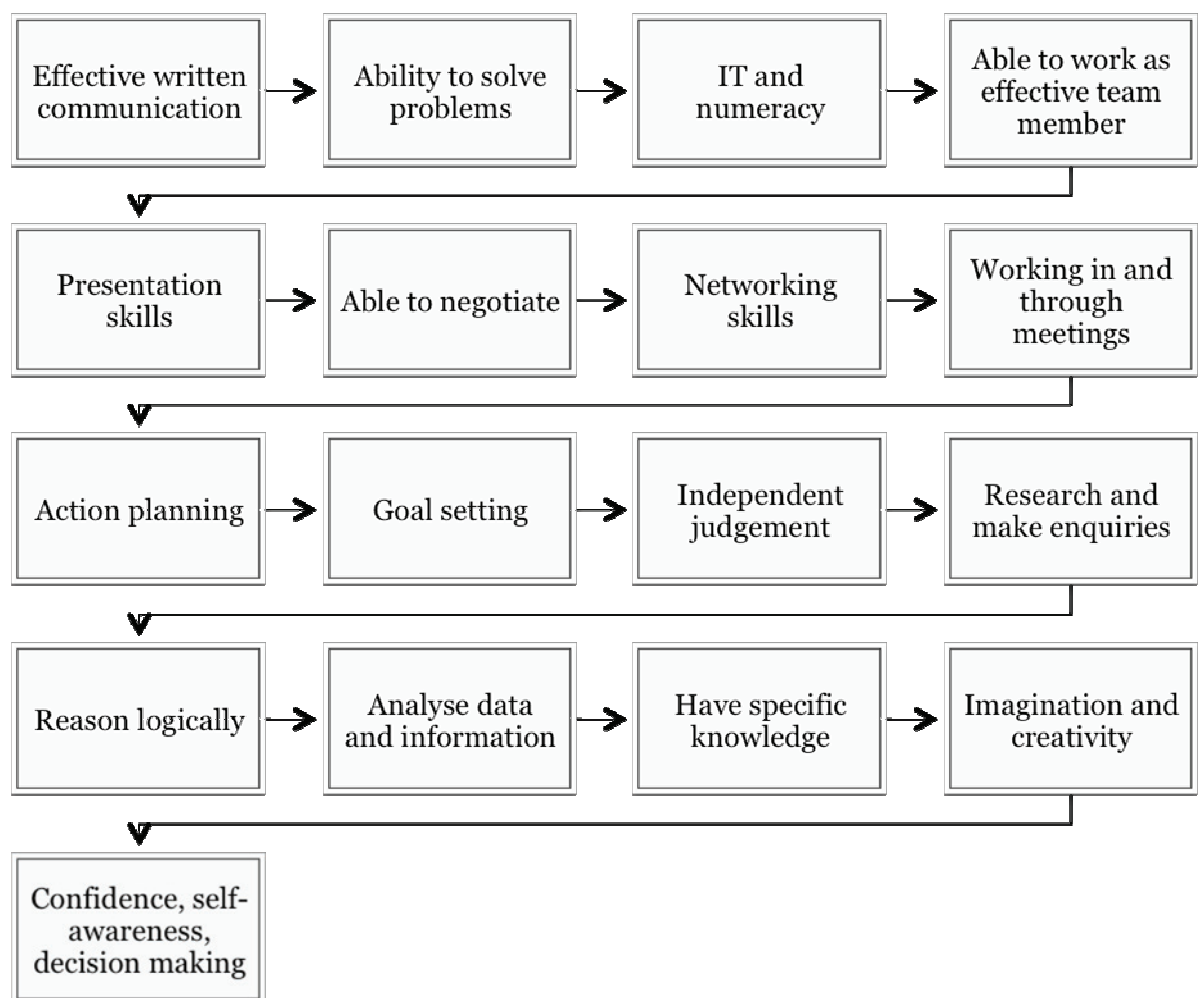
Your Views

Having looked at all of the evidence in this unit, how meaningful is the word 'career'?

This could be explored in class through debate, or the collaborative writing of an entry for a dictionary for a specific audience, e.g. younger children.

A contemporary alternative to 'career' is the idea of the personal 'skill-set'. The diagram on the right could be used to explore this further.

The Complete Graduate



Extensions

These are the questions used to conduct the interviews available in this resource.

If students each conducted one interview of an adult they know, you would have a much richer pool of data to draw on for the writing task.

Students can make recordings using the audio tool on many mobile phones, or any of their other 'digital native' gadgets.

- What does the word 'career' mean to you?
- How would you describe your career?
- Is this the career you imagined you would have when you were younger?
- How did you get into your career?
- How do you see your career developing in the future?
- Do you think careers have changed in your working life? If so, how?
- What advice would you give younger people as they start their working lives?

References

This unit was created by Julie Blake and Tim Shortis.

Dictionary definitions in the starter resource were all found by googling 'define career' and selecting the top item 'Web definitions for career'.

For guidance on the ethics of collecting interview data, see the "[Research Ethics](#)" resource in the Teachit Language Library, available free in pdf.

The collocations list was compiled using the [VIEW](#) interface to the British National Corpus of 100 million words.

We would like to thank all of our interviewees for their enormous help with this project.

Images sourced from Flickr under Creative Commons Licence:
andrew_buckie/215450343, billjacobus/1122497422, diurno/3030112528,
justincormack/191060886, kindredspirits/45347307, pattyh/185773843

The list of attributes comes from a careers education handout acquired many years ago called 'The Complete Graduate'. We would be very happy to be able to acknowledge it more precisely.