

# Chapter 4

# Making Career Decisions

## Lesson 4.1

### Making Decisions

## Lesson 4.2

### Career Strategy

#### CAREER CLUSTER

You will explore the Business, Management, and Administration career cluster.



#### What You'll Learn

- You will learn that decision making allows you to take charge of your future.
- You will learn how to make major decisions in seven steps.





## Get Ready!

### Rate Your Decisions

Record the decisions you make during one day. Label each decision with an *E* if it was easy to make or an *H* if it was hard to make. Then ask an adult friend or family member to list and label five recent decisions.

**Apply** Compare the lists. Which decisions were hard to make? Which were easy? Why are some decisions harder to make than others? What did you do to make the hard decisions?

# Making Decisions



## Discover

- Why decision making is an important skill
- Steps you can follow to make decisions
- How to deal with things that stand in the way of decisions
- How to make better decisions

## Why It's Important

Decisions are an important part of life. The stronger your decision-making skills, the wiser your decisions will be.

## KEY TERMS

- **decision**
- **obstacle**
- **outcome**
- **adaptability**
- **attitude**

Should I go to the mall or study for the test? Should I try out for the school play or go out for a sport? Which movie should I see? Should I tell my friend what someone said about her? Should I do what everyone else is doing?

Every day you make hundreds of decisions. Each **decision** is a choice you make about what action to take. Some decisions are pretty routine, like deciding what to wear. Other decisions—such as what classes to take—require more time and thought.

## Taking Charge of Your Future

Decision making is an important life skill. Decision-making skills will help you in your personal and professional life. When you make a decision, you have a say about some part of your life. You take action, instead of leaving your choices to others or to chance. You take control of where you are and where you're going.

What do you want to do with your life? Whatever you choose, you'll face important decisions along the way. Some decisions are harder to make than others. Try building on each decision you make. Making decisions will give you confidence and a sense of freedom from knowing you're taking charge of your future.

## Making Routine and Major Decisions

In the world of work, you will want to make the best decisions possible—no matter if they are routine or major. You make routine decisions every day, like deciding what to have for lunch or whether to walk or take the bus home. Routine decisions like these can seem almost automatic. You barely have to think about them.



### Take Control

You've been making decisions all your life. *What decisions have you made already today?*

Major decisions are something completely different, however. They often have a lasting effect on your life. Because of this, you want to take time to think about them carefully.

## The Seven Steps of Effective Decision Making

The hardest part about making an important decision may be figuring out where to start. Making a decision is easier if you break the problem into smaller parts.

**Figure 4.1** on pages 64–65 shows seven basic steps to follow in making major decisions. You can apply these steps to any important decision you face. With each decision, you'll become more familiar with the steps. Soon you'll see how these steps help you make important decisions.

## Overcoming Problems

Of course, nothing is ever as simple as 1-2-3. That's as true of decision making as anything else. Even when you carefully follow the seven basic steps, you can run into obstacles. An **obstacle** is something that stands in your way.

## Meeting Obstacles

Ishiro Nagata ran into several obstacles when he faced an important decision. His heart set on a career in journalism, he signed up to be on the school newspaper staff. He was surprised when his friends said the newspaper job sounded boring. He was surprised again when his parents weren't happy with the idea. They were worried he wouldn't have time for his homework.

Although Ishiro was offered a spot on the newspaper's staff, he wasn't so sure that he should take it. He worried that his friends or his parents were right, or that he wouldn't do a good job anyway.

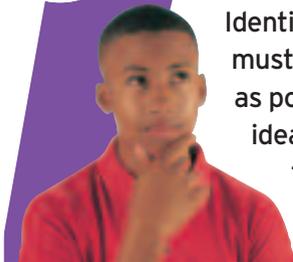
**Figure 4.1**

## SEVEN STEPS TO A DECISION

Seven steps can help you make informed decisions. *What decisions do you need to make? How can the seven steps help you?*

**1**

### Define Your Needs or Wants



Identify the decision you must make. Be as specific as possible. Narrow your ideas so that you can focus on just one decision.

**2**

### Analyze Your Resources

When you analyze something, you carefully study all its parts. You've already spent some time analyzing your personal resources. How will these resources help you make a decision? What other resources can you use?



**3**

### Identify Your Options

Options are possible choices. There are usually at least two options whenever you face a decision. What are your choices in this situation?

**4**

### Gather Information

Find out as much as you can about your options. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each? Think through all the possibilities.

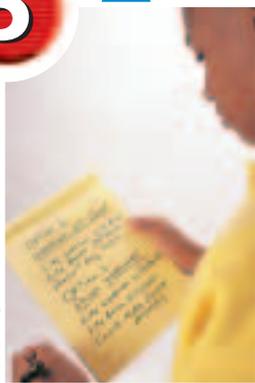


## Finding Answers to Obstacles

Ishiro took some time to look at what was standing in the way of his decision. He knew he couldn't change his friends' ideas. That was all right. Working on the newspaper was important to him. It made sense for his future plans.

Then he thought about his parents' concerns. Ishiro decided to talk to other newspaper staff about how they made time for homework. He realized that he could handle his homework by managing his time carefully. Ishiro made a plan and shared it with his parents. Ishiro's parents felt much better after he explained his time management strategy. They decided to support his decision.

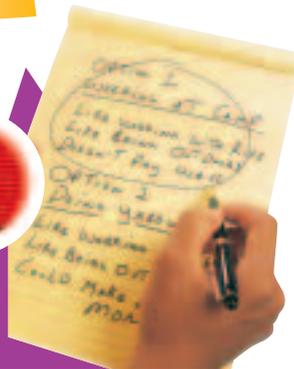
5



### Evaluate Your Options

When you evaluate your choices, you judge their value or importance to you. Review the information you've gathered. Compare your options. Which will best meet your needs or wants?

6



### Make a Decision

This is the point where you actually decide. Now is the time to choose one of your options.

7



### Plan How to Reach Your Goal

When you make a decision, you set a goal for yourself. A goal is something you want to achieve, or carry out. Once you've made a decision, make a plan of action. Figure out how you're going to carry out your decision and make it real.

# Career

## Opportunities

### **Business, Management, and Administration**

If you like business, numbers, and organizing things, then you might consider a career in business, management, and administration. This career cluster includes people who keep business moving.

#### **Critical Thinking**

Why do you think a tax examiner would need to undergo a background check?

#### **TAX EXAMINER**

State government seeks tax examiner to review individual and business tax returns. Examiners must be detail-oriented and have excellent math skills. The background of the final candidate will be checked.

### **Never Give in to Obstacles**

Ishiro could have let others' ideas stand in his way. He would have given up something important to himself, though. He identified what stood in his way, and he was able to do something about it.

**Figure 4.2** shows some common obstacles to decisions and how to handle them. You'll run into these and other obstacles as you face decisions. The important thing is not to give up. Look for a way around the obstacles.

### **Making Better Decisions**

As you go through life, you'll get better and better at making decisions. If you learn something from each decision, you'll make a better choice next time.

### **Keep Practicing the Seven Steps**

The more decisions you make using the seven basic steps, the more skilled you'll become. With practice, you'll feel more comfortable using the decision-making process.

**Figure 4.2****WHAT STANDS IN YOUR WAY?**

<b>Obstacles</b>	<b>Answers</b>
<p><b>You think you can't do something.</b>            "I can't because I'm not old enough."            "I can't because I'm a girl/I'm a boy."            "I can't because of my race or background."</p>	<p>You may not be able to do everything. For example, your age may keep you from driving or getting a certain kind of job. Make sure that you aren't using who you are as an excuse, though. Don't let an excuse stand in the way of a decision that's right for you.</p>
<p><b>You expect too much of yourself.</b>            "If I can't do it perfectly, I won't do it at all."</p>	<p>It isn't always possible or necessary to do things perfectly. You can always do your best.</p>
<p><b>You expect too little of yourself.</b>            "I won't even try, because I know I can't do it."</p>	<p>If you never try, you'll never know what you can do. You might even discover that the task is easier than you think.</p>
<p><b>Your family expects too much of you.</b>            "What if I let them down?"</p>	<p>Talk to your family members. Ask for their help in making decisions and carrying them out.</p>
<p><b>Your family doesn't have the money to support what you want to do.</b>            "I can't afford it."</p>	<p>You can apply for money for training and education. Find out about scholarships, financial aid, and student loans. You can get a job to pay your expenses. You can find a way to do what you want if you want it badly enough.</p>
<p><b>Your friends or family make fun of what you want to do.</b>            "Maybe they're right. It is a stupid idea."</p>	<p>Talk with your friends or family members. Tell them you feel hurt when they make fun of your dreams. Ask them for their support. Give them specific ideas about how they can support you.</p>
<p><b>Your friends pressure you to do what they want you to do.</b>            "I should go along with them or they won't be my friends anymore."</p>	<p>Trust yourself. You know what is right or not right for you. Your friends aren't really friends if they pressure you into something.</p>
<p><b>You're afraid of failure.</b>            "What if I'm no good at this?"</p>	<p>You fail only if you don't make a decision or don't try.</p>
<p><b>You're afraid of change and new situations.</b>            "I don't know what it's going to be like."            "I don't know how to act or what to say."</p>	<p>Change isn't easy, but don't let fear of a new situation keep you from making a decision. You can't know exactly what's going to happen, but with time and experience you'll feel more comfortable.</p>
<p><b>You put things off.</b>            "I'll do that later."</p>	<p>Don't wait around. Make a date with yourself and keep it. If you wait too long, the decision may be made for you.</p>

**Making Decisions** We can all think of reasons not to make decisions. Do any of these sound familiar? *Why does it help to identify obstacles that get in your way?*

## Attitude Counts

### Self-Esteem

Maybe you feel a little awkward talking about activities in which you excel. Don't be! As you prepare to investigate possible careers, remember that no one knows your skills better than you do. Speak up and tell people what you're good at!

### Cooperative Learning Activity

- Working in a small group, look up the definition of self-esteem.
- Discuss this definition, then write your group's description of self-esteem on a poster board.
- Surround your description with a collage of pictures showing the many things your group members are good at and enjoy.
- Hang your poster in the classroom.

### Pay Attention to Everyday Decisions

Think carefully about everyday decisions, even routine decisions. This will help keep you on track to your career goal. If a decision doesn't turn out well, figure out what went wrong.

### Recognize and Plan for Obstacles

Obstacles cause less damage if you recognize them early. If an obstacle presents itself, figure out how to work around it and strategize a backup plan. If something is important to you, make it happen.

### Accept The Outcome of Each Decision

The **outcome** of your decision is its result or effect. Even if you made the best decision possible, things may not turn out the way you thought they would. A new decision may have a different outcome.

### Be Willing to Change Your Decision

Decisions are not set in stone. Have a backup plan prepared. If circumstances change, be flexible and adaptable. **Adaptability** is being able or willing to change in order to suit different conditions. It is an essential quality in an ever-changing work environment.

### Check Your Attitude

Your **attitude** is your basic outlook on life. Do you look for good things to happen, or do you expect the worst? Your attitude determines how you react to different situations. It also affects how you are perceived by others. If you have a positive attitude, you're already on your way to success on the job.

### Forget About Luck

You don't need to depend on luck for your decision. If you gather information and make a plan for reaching your goal, you don't need to think about luck. Take control of your life and what happens to you. Get the facts, make plans, and take action—for yourself!

### Key Terms Review

1. Write a one-page article on making decisions. Use the key terms below in your article. Ask a partner to review your article when you're finished writing.
  - decision
  - adaptability
  - obstacle
  - attitude
  - outcome

### Check Your Understanding

Use complete sentences to answer the following questions. Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

2. The third step of the decision-making process is to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. make a decision
  - b. identify your options
  - c. evaluate the information
3. One way to polish your decision-making skills is to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. pay attention to the decisions you make every day
  - b. identify your options
  - c. count on luck

### Critical Thinking

Use complete sentences to answer the following questions. Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

4. Do you think it is important to consider other people's opinions when making a career decision? Explain.

5. What kinds of obstacles have you faced while making a decision? How did you handle them?
6. How might your attitude make it difficult to learn from a decision?

### Character Building

7. **Is It Just Luck?** Mira loves animals. Last summer she wanted to take an animal training class, but her family couldn't afford it. The local zoo has a teen volunteer program this summer. Applications are due tomorrow. Mira just found out about the program. She doesn't think she has enough time to fill out the application perfectly, so she isn't even going to bother applying. Mira thinks she just has plain bad luck. Is this true? Write a paragraph explaining your answer.



### Teamwork

8. **Create a Skit** In a small group, brainstorm excuses people might give for not making decisions. Write down all the ideas you have. Then create a skit with some group members role-playing people making excuses and other team members convincing the excuse-makers that it's important to make decisions. Rehearse your skit and then share it with the class.



## Lesson 4.2

# Career Strategy

### Discover

- How to make decisions about careers
- How to check your career decisions

### Why It's Important

Career choices are important decisions. Before making a choice, you'll want to give time and thought to all the possibilities.

### KEY TERMS

- **decision-making process**
- **backup plan**

Imagine that you want to take a hike through a park or the woods. There are several different paths that you can take depending on where you want to go.

A career path is like a hiking path. Your ultimate career goal will determine which career path you take.

### Taking It Step by Step

Choosing a career is a big decision—one that takes time and thought. You can use the decision-making process to decide on a career path. The **decision-making process** is the series of steps that help you identify and evaluate choices. It will guide you toward your career goal.

You don't have to make a decision about a career right now. For now, use the decision-making process as you explore career paths. You'll have some fun, and it'll be good practice. When you're ready to decide on a career, you'll know the steps to follow.

#### Be an Explorer

Sometimes making a decision is the only way to do some exploring. *What can you learn from exploring a decision?*



## Step 1. Understand What You Need and Want

The path to a career starts with your hopes and dreams. To begin, think about the lifestyle you want. Where do you want to live? Do you want a career that allows you to travel or to stay at home? How much money do you think you'll need or want to earn? How much time and energy will you want to give to your career? What kind of people do you want to work with? What career will give you what you need and want?

## Step 2. Review Your Career Resources

Who are you? What do you have to offer? Get out those lists of interests, values, aptitudes, and skills. Review them and update them. Also consider your personality and learning style. What you know about yourself will help you decide on a career that is right for you.

## Step 3. Decide What Careers Seem Interesting

List your top career options. What are some careers that match your personal goals and resources? If you're having a hard time thinking of a career you would enjoy, dream a little. Does someone you know have an interesting career? Do you have an idea for a career you're not sure exists? Did a career in one of the career clusters sound interesting? Perhaps a career interest area that describes you points to some careers. Explore your options.



### Get Advice

Family members can help you with career decisions.

*Who else can give you career advice?*

## Step 4. Research Potential Careers

You know where to look for information about careers. Go to the library. Search the Internet. Talk to people. Get some experience on the job. Gather as much information as you can. You may discover other interesting career possibilities. Add them to your list of options, then research some more.

## Step 5. Compare Your Choices

Now evaluate your choices. Study the information you've gathered. Consider your needs and wants. How does each career match your personal goals and resources? Compare your choices. Try to zero in on the career that best meets your needs and wants. List the second best, the third, and so on.

## Step 6. Make Your Decision

Choose the career that seems best for you. If you're having trouble deciding, take a deep breath and relax. None of the choices may stand out as the right one. The differences between them may be very small. Just make the best decision you can. Use your research and what you know about yourself. Keep in mind that you can change your mind. No decision has to be final, but making a decision—even if you change it later—will give your life direction.

### Exploring Online



Remember, one of  
your best resources is  
[exploring.glencoe.com](http://exploring.glencoe.com)

## Step 7. Plan How to Reach Your Career Goal

You've made a decision. Now you have to see it through. Make a plan. Figure out how you're going to get from where you are to where you want to be. Refer to Chapter 5 for some help in developing a plan of action.

### Make a List

Sometimes it helps to see how your options stack up against each other.

*What else might you do when you're having trouble making a choice?*



## Follow the Steps

Imagine that you have been offered two jobs, and you have to decide which one to accept. Both jobs are your desired occupation. The first job pays \$30,000 a year and is in the field you are most interested in. The second job pays \$34,000 a year. It is in a related field that you find interesting and in which you will be able to develop transferable skills and experience relevant to your career goals. Assuming that everything else is equal, use the seven-step decision-making process to choose between the two jobs.

**Report Your Decision** Prepare an oral or written report describing the specific factors that you considered during your decision-making process. Make a chart of the seven steps with a column for the decisions you make at each step and a column for the reasons for your decisions. If you give an oral report to the class, prepare your chart on a poster board or large piece of paper. Display and explain your chart during the presentation.

## Checking and Changing Direction

Making a decision and acting on it is not the end of the decision-making process. Once you've put your plan into action, you need to check your decision. Continue to evaluate your decision to make sure you really are on the right path. One way to ensure that you stay on a path that's right for you is to have a backup plan. A **backup plan** is an alternative course of action.

## Evaluate, Evaluate!

To evaluate a decision, look at both its benefits and its drawbacks. Be objective. If your decision was the right decision, you should be able to see benefits. If the decision resulted in drawbacks, identify them and figure out a way to correct them.

Evaluation is an ongoing process. You do it all the time. At each point on your career path, you will want to stop and evaluate where you are. Right now, take a good look at the information you've gathered about your career choice. Ask yourself, "Is this really what I want to go after? Am I committed to achieving it?" If the answer is no, you should reconsider your decision and come up with a new plan.



## Making Decisions

**Q:** I'm afraid that I'll make the wrong choice. How can I be 100 percent sure about my decisions?

**A:** Start by following the decision-making steps in this book. Once you've done that, it's always helpful to ask your friends and family members for advice. In the end, you can never be 100 percent sure about a decision until after you have made it. That's why making a decision can be so hard. Remember, decisions don't have to be final. You can check and adjust your decisions along the way.

## Keep Asking Questions

One way to check your decision along the way is to ask questions. **Figure 4.3** shows some questions that will help you to decide if you have made the right career decision.

## Starting Over

Your answers to these questions will give you direction. They will help you decide if you need to start over. You may decide to continue on your career path, or go back and choose a different career.

Never be afraid to start over. Life is about change. That's part of the fun—and the challenge—of being alive.

**Figure 4.3**

### CAREER QUESTIONS

■ Does the work give me a feeling of accomplishment?

■ Is the work interesting? Will it always be?

■ Am I using my skills in this career?

■ Does this career fit my values, lifestyle, and other things that are important to me?

■ How am I better off choosing this career over another?

■ Do I want to do this kind of work for another 5 or 10 years?

■ Will this work pay me enough to support the lifestyle I want?

**Interview Yourself** Questions are a good way to check a career decision. Some questions will occur to you because of changes in your career field. Others may just show your changing feelings about a career choice. *What other questions might you ask about a career decision?*

## The Global Workplace

### How to Meet and Greet

It's polite to greet someone you have just met with a firm handshake, right? Not always! A handshake is the traditional way to greet a person in North America, but in other parts of the world greetings differ.

In Japan the proper way to greet a person is with a bow. To welcome another person in Southeast Asia, press together your palms as if praying. When meeting people in countries that do use the handshake as a greeting, know that you will still need to be careful. Others around the world consider the firm handshake used in the United States too aggressive. A lighter handshake is preferred in these countries.

### Internet Activity

Use Internet resources to learn what the traditional greeting is in one other country. Is this greeting used in both business and social situations? Do men and women use the same greeting? Go to the *Exploring Careers* Web site at [exploring.glencoe.com](http://exploring.glencoe.com) for a list of Web sites to help you complete this activity.



Martina Lewis of Titusville, Florida, thinks change can be wonderful. She started over when she was about your age. Her family moved to Florida when she was 12. She thought her life was over. She had grown up on a horse farm in Kentucky. All she wanted was to breed horses someday. Suddenly, there was more water around than grass. That move changed her life:

“ The more time I spent around the ocean, the more I loved it. It was a natural decision to become a marine botanist. I study ocean plants and how they keep the environment clean. If my family had stayed in Kentucky, I never would have discovered the ocean. I couldn't be happier. ”

Starting over can be scary and difficult. In the end, though, you may discover a path that you didn't even know existed.

### Key Terms Review

1. On a separate sheet of paper, write a short paragraph on how to use the decision-making process. Explain how to use the decision-making process to choose and achieve a career goal. Use each key term at least once in your paragraph.

- decision-making process
- backup plan

### Check Your Understanding

Tell whether each statement is true or false. Rewrite any false statement to make it true. Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

2. A career path is like a hiking path. To get to the career you want, you have to make a decision.
3. At each point on your career path, don't stop to evaluate where you are, or you will never make a decision.
4. Making a decision and acting on it is the end of the decision-making process.

### Critical Thinking

Use complete sentences to answer the following questions. Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

5. Why is it important to use the seven decision-making steps when choosing a career?

6. When do you think you can stop evaluating a career decision? Explain your answer.

### Connecting to the Workplace

7. **Career Check** Gaby has been a secretary for five years. She chose this career because it uses her word-processing and scheduling skills. She also loved working for only one executive. Her office just updated its computer system. This allows Gaby's boss to do most of her own typing and scheduling. Since Gaby has fewer duties, she now works for three executives. She's wondering if it's time to change careers. Make a list of some career questions Gaby should ask herself to check if her career path is still right for her.

### Community Involvement

8. **Conduct an Interview** Interview a business owner in your community about the career path he or she chose. Ask the following questions during your interview. How did you decide to start a business? Did your original plans ever change? What decisions did you have to make to get the business going? Report your findings to the class.

# Investigating Career Clusters



## BUSINESS, MANAGEMENT, AND ADMINISTRATION

- Business** ● Buying and selling goods and services
- Management** ● The direction or control of a business
- Administration** ● Maintaining the goals and rules of an organization

Job Title	Work Description
<b>Auditor</b>	Reviews business practices and financial records
<b>Controller</b>	Manages a company's finances
<b>H.R. Manager</b>	Recruits and interviews employees, or human resources (H.R.); gives advice on hiring and training; and runs employee programs
<b>Management Analyst</b>	Analyzes a company and suggests ways for it to do its work faster and better
<b>Marketing Manager</b>	Develops marketing plans to sell a company's products
<b>Organizational Psychologist</b>	Uses psychology to improve how well employees do their jobs and to improve the quality of life at work
<b>Payroll Clerk</b>	Makes sure that employees are paid on time and that their paychecks are correct
<b>Secretary</b>	Performs the administrative duties of an office

### Exploration Activity

**Business, Management, and Administration** Use library and Internet resources to research a career in the Business, Management, and Administration career cluster. Write a report on the kinds of work, skills required, working conditions, training and education required, and career outlook.

**Cooperative Learning** Interview a classmate about the career he or she researched. Find out as much information about that career as you can during the interview. Then have your classmate interview you about the career you researched. Afterward, share what you learned with the class.

### Chapter Highlights

**Lesson 4.1** When you make a decision, you take charge of a part of your life.

**Lesson 4.2** You can use the seven-step decision-making process to make career decisions.

### Key Concept Review

Use complete sentences to answer the following questions. Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. List and explain the seven steps in the decision-making process.
2. What should you do if you run into obstacles while making a decision?
3. What can you learn from decisions you've made?
4. What important step follows the decision-making process?
5. How can you check a decision?

### Critical Thinking

Use complete sentences to answer the following questions. Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

6. How is making no decision actually a decision?
7. Why is it bad to let others make your decisions?
8. What might happen if you skip steps in decision making?

9. What two steps in the decision-making process make luck unnecessary?
10. Why do you think some people are unhappy in their careers?

### Skill Building

#### 11. Thinking—Decision Making

Use the seven-step decision-making process to make a decision. Then evaluate the outcome of your decision. Make notes to help you with your next decision.

#### 12. Interpersonal—Serves Clients/Customers

Carrie sells newspaper advertising space. She spends most of her time working with large stores because they buy the largest ads. The smaller advertisers say Carrie neglects them. Use the decision-making process to show how she can give all her customers the attention they need. Show the steps in a chart.

## Academic Applications

### 13. Mathematics



A cashier job pays \$105.00 for 20 hours a week. A bike repair job pays \$5.75 an hour for 16 hours a week. Which job pays more per hour? More each week? What besides money might affect your decision? Which job would you choose? Why?

### 14. Computer Science



In school, you use two kinds of software—one for word processing, and one for drawing. You'd like to buy some new software to try at home. You've got three choices, but you can't decide which to get. Where could you get the information you need to help you decide? Make a plan for gathering information. Share your plan with a partner.



## Make a Career Plan

- **Use** the seven-step decision-making process to select a career.
- **List** the steps you will need to take to achieve your career goal. Describe each step in a sentence or two.
- **Summarize** the benefits of your plan in a short paragraph.
- **Write** a paragraph about the potential obstacles that could get in the way of your plan.
- **Write** backup plans to use in the case of each obstacle.
- **Title** the document *Career Plan* and file it in your Personal Career Portfolio.
- **Revise** the document if you discover new steps to your career goal as you continue to evaluate your career decisions.
- **List** your portfolio entry on your Personal Career Portfolio contents page.