

DISCOVER YOUR FUTURE

CareerWorld

September 2007 Volume 36, No. 1 • www.weeklyreader.com/teens

A Teacher Tells All

**What does it
take to be a
fifth-grade
teacher?
Find out ...**



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Who Is That Masked Man?

Is this a robot baker with an elaborate layer cake?

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Early Bird Loses Worm

Beginning this school year, Harvard, Princeton, and the University of Virginia are no longer accepting early decision applications. The universities join a growing list of schools—such as the University of Delaware and the University of North Carolina—that have eliminated or revamped their early admission policies in recent years.

Early decision candidates generally apply to their number-one school in early November and

have an answer in December. At many schools, applying early means a better chance of being accepted. Critics argue that seniors who are already stressed out over their college decision feel added pressure to apply early.

Harvard interim president Derek Bok noted that early admission policies “advantage the advantaged”—that is, they favor wealthier students from better high schools. The process shuts out many less-privileged students, who need to compare financial aid offers before selecting a college. “We hope that doing away with early admission will improve the process and make it simpler and fairer,” says Bok.

By the Books



There’s more to military training than boot camp. Each branch of the armed forces has recommended reading lists that are meant to promote such universal skills as critical thinking, leadership, and cultural awareness. The subjects go far beyond just military history.

Here’s a sampling from the U.S. Navy reading list:

Billy Budd & Other Stories,

by Herman Melville

The Caine Mutiny: A Novel,

by Herman Wouk

Starship Troopers, by Robert A. Heinlein

A Passage to India, by E. M. Forster

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People,

by Stephen R. Covey

The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference,

by Malcolm Gladwell

Source: U.S. Navy, National Defense University

All Work AND NO PLAY...

How did you spend your summer vacation? Although most workers might answer "at the beach" or "relaxing by the pool," their bosses would probably say "working." Three of four business executives work at least a few times a week while on vacation, according to a recent survey by OfficeTeam. However, more than half of regular employees have never worked at all during their time off. Diane Domeyer, executive director of OfficeTeam, cautions that everyone should shut off their laptops and PDAs and concentrate on recharging their own batteries on vacation or "they may return from breaks as weary as when they left."



76%
of **bosses**
work at
least a few
times a week
while **on**
vacation.

54%
of
employees
never work
while **on**
vacation.



Reality TV

It's no secret that TV's top stars make big bucks, but can the same be said for the characters they play? Here's a look at the average salaries some of prime time's popular characters would earn in the real world:

Dr. Gregory House, *House*,
Infectious Disease Doctor:
\$191,011



Alan Harper,
Two and a
Half Men,
Chiropractor:
\$82,060

Simone Deveaux, *Heroes*,
Art Dealer: \$70,000



Homer Simpson,
The Simpsons,
Nuclear Safety
Inspector: \$67,422

Sara Sidle, *CSI*,
Forensics
Investigator:
\$53,990



Lorelai Gilmore,
Gilmore Girls,
Inn Owner: \$47,420



Betty Suarez,
Ugly Betty,
Executive Assistant:
\$37,810

Pam Beesly, *The Office*,
Receptionist: \$23,120

Sources: CareerBuilder.com; Bureau of Labor Statistics; Salary.com; Savannah College of Art and Design

Auto Motivated

There's no set blueprint for reaching your dream job. Esther Martinez, a studio design engineer at General Motors (GM) in Detroit, is proof of that. After high school, Martinez took a job as a receptionist at a local hospital. A few years later, she was laid off from her job. Martinez—who had two toddlers by that time—needed to reevaluate her future. “I had to reflect on where it was that I really needed to be heading,” she says, “and the answer for me at that point was to go back to school.”

She applied to a machinist training program through Focus:HOPE, a Detroit-based nonprofit. After finishing at the top of her class, Martinez pursued a college degree while also working as an intern at the GM design center. In 2004, she earned

a bachelor's degree in vehicle design from Central Michigan University. Today she is a key part of a design team that has helped reinvigorate the GM lineup. One car she helped design, the Saturn Aura, was Car of the Year at the 2007 North American International Auto Show.

Martinez's job requires equal parts technical skill and creativity. She uses computer-aided design software to help her analyze 3-D models of automotive designs. Her job is to ensure that all the design and engineering elements come together. Martinez says the best part of the job is seeing those concepts become reality—“actually being able to sit in the vehicle and drive it and then, most importantly, seeing how excited everyone else is about [it].”



Esther Martinez sits behind the wheel of the new Saturn Aura, which she had a hand in designing.



Ready to Get to Work?

87% of teens say they're prepared to enter the workforce, according to a Junior Achievement poll. That's good news—sort of.

Employers say they believe just the opposite. In particular, employers express concern with teens' lack of "soft skills," such as punctuality, teamwork, and conflict resolution. "These workplace skills are not always a natural part of the less formal work experiences [such as babysitting, doing yard work, or walking dogs] that younger people have while they are growing up," says Darrell Luzzo, senior vice president of education at JA Worldwide.

Luzzo says the best way to narrow this gap is for young people to grab on to opportunities to learn about and develop those skills. Start by getting involved in school clubs, teams, or community service organizations and working your way toward leadership roles.



A Fine Mess

Pick up your clothes! Straighten up your desk! Clean up your locker! Almost from birth, the message is drilled into our heads: Messy, bad; neat, good. But what if that message is wrong? "In general, systems that are at least slightly messy tend to work better than systems that are very neat," says David Freedman, coauthor of *A Perfect Mess: The Hidden Benefits of Disorder*. As if you needed more incentive not to clean up, Freedman explains some of the hidden benefits of mess.

Mess saves time. "If you're going to keep a really neat desk, you're going to be working on it all the time," Freedman says. Neat people can spend more than an hour a day just straightening up—instead of focusing on more important things.

Mess fuels creativity. "When you go hunting through piles, you rediscover things," Freedman explains. "It reminds you of things; it gives you new ideas." Albert Einstein was a genius—and a notorious slob.



Mess is good for business. When you follow rigid schedules and highly ordered processes, Freedman says, "you lock out new opportunities; you lock out the chance ... for things to adapt to a very fast-changing, dynamic world."



Making the Grade

A fifth-grade teacher gives the inside scoop on life in front of the classroom.

BY BRIAN FITZGERALD

Back to school means back to work for teachers. This September, Zebulun Dinkins begins his third year as a fifth-grade social studies teacher at Welcome Elementary School in Greenville, S.C. A 2005 graduate of Claffin University in Orangeburg, S.C., Dinkins participated in Call Me MISTER (www.callmemister.clemson.edu), a program that addresses a critical shortage of African American male teachers in South Carolina's elementary schools. The program helps young men become role models and bring a fresh approach to the classroom. Dinkins has done just that, in part, by spinning some of his class lessons into raps that he delivers to captivated students. He's also released his own educational rap CD (www.motivationaleducation.net). After a busy day in the classroom, Dinkins spoke to *Career World* about the ups and downs—and surprises—that come with being a teacher.

When did you decide you wanted to become a teacher?

In my junior year of high school, I had an art teacher, Alvin Staley, who always gave me a lot of positive feedback. I had been working on this one

particular drawing for about two weeks—putting a lot of effort into it—and Mr. Staley came by one day and said, “Man, that looks great, and you’ve been doing a great job!” That really influenced me. I wanted to make somebody else feel the way I was feeling at that moment. That’s when I decided that I wanted to be a teacher.

What was your first day of teaching like?

I was sweating bullets! [*laughs*] And I’ll tell you, staring at that class for the first time, with all those eyes on you, knowing that this is your class—it’s overwhelming. When you’re a student teacher, you have a mentor teacher who you can ask for advice and who will tell you what you’re doing wrong. But when you get your own classroom, all that goes away. It’s all on you.

The first year is the hardest year ... because everything is new—from using the copy machine to going to the lunchroom to learning how the whole school culture works. You’ve got to go with the flow and rely on your training. And you’ve got to find your niche, your pattern of how you want to do things—and that takes a long time to develop.





Zebulun Dinkins works with students during small-group time.

What was the idea behind bringing rap music into your teaching?

A lot of students aren't moved by the textbook alone. My idea was to do something more creative, more entertaining ... I started going over the text and realized that I could really make it into music. Hip-hop music can be fun, and I knew the students would really go for it. I make sure that every song is attached to a state teaching standard, so when the standardized tests come around, [I hope] students' minds will be quick to remember what they heard in the song.

What was the reaction of students the first time you rapped in class?

They thought it was the coolest thing they had ever seen and heard! Some started calling me "the Jay-Z of Welcome Elementary." Parents have been really good about it too. They see that I'm trying to do something that's above the normal standards of the job. And I think they acknowledge that I go that extra mile for their kids.

Do your students ever make you laugh?

Oh, yeah. They do the craziest things. This one little guy, one day he ... was mimicking the voice of another teacher. And as a teacher, you're supposed to tell him, "Now, don't do that, that's not nice," but it was just so funny because he had [the voice] down perfectly. You try to be firm, but deep down you want to laugh, and sometimes it comes out.

What's one part of your job that might surprise students?

Well, the school day ends for the kids at 2:25, but my day is just starting. Time management is the most challenging part of teaching, because you don't have enough [time]. You want to focus all your time on working with your students and assessing



Dinkins uses rap and storytelling techniques to capture students' attention.

them, but it's hard to find adequate time to do that, because you have to go to meetings, workshops. ... At home you reflect on what you taught that day—Do I move on? Do I review?—and plan the lesson for the next day. I grade papers, call parents if there are any problems—not to mention the extra paperwork, the administrative stuff, which can drain you. It's unbelievable how many things come up that I wouldn't even have thought about before becoming a teacher.

What's one of the toughest parts of your job?

I really pull for the kids who don't get the best grades. When I'm putting in grades, and I know a kid has put forth [his or her] best effort, I might want to bump up the grade a bit, mainly to give [the kid] confidence. So those are hard decisions because I don't want to reward them unfairly. I also want to be fair to the kids who always do their work and get good grades, so it's kind of hard to balance that sometimes.



Outside the classroom, teachers often meet about curriculum and administrative details.

What advice do you have for future teachers?

Be passionate. It's about being passionate about what you're doing and trying to make a difference. You've got to be really strong, especially in that first year, because it can be overwhelming. But if you focus more on the positive, then good things will come to you.



Think you have what it takes to be a teacher?

Here are a few things you need to know.

Requirements

- A bachelor's degree and completion of an approved teacher-training program, with supervised student teaching, are necessary.
- Many states require teachers to obtain a master's degree within a specified time period—say, five years—after they begin teaching.
- Educators need a state license, usually granted by the state board of education, to teach a certain grade level, such as early childhood (pre-K through grade 3) or elementary (grades 1 through 6 or 8)

Money Matters

- The average starting salary for teachers nationwide is \$31,704.*
- Salaries for teachers vary greatly from state to state—the average salary in Connecticut is 70 percent higher than that in South Dakota—or even district to district.
- Many states offer loan-forgiveness programs for students who commit to teach in that state for a certain number of years.

*2004 figures (the most recent available) from the American Federation of Teachers
Sources: Bureau of Labor Statistics; American Federation of Teachers



MAPPING Your Future

Welcome to the high-tech world of cartography.

BY STEPHANIE FITZGERALD

You might think mapmaking is a dying profession—after all, hasn't every spot on Earth already been plotted? But mapmaking, or cartography, today is a rapidly growing industry that's on the cutting edge of technology.

"Making a map is like painting a bridge," says Jim Berardinelli, president of Southeastern Reprographics, Inc. (SRI), a utility mapping company in Alpharetta, Ga. "You start at one end and by the time you're done, you have to start back at the beginning." That's because landmarks are always changing. One new road is all it takes to make a map out of date. But today's technology is allowing cartographers to "paint bridges" faster and more precisely than ever before.

High-Tech Tools of the Trade

Every map starts with a base map—a satellite image or an aerial photo that contains the information you'd expect to see on a map, such as landforms, major roads, and waterways. That is called geographic, or spatial, information.

Cartographers often use Global Positioning System (GPS) technology to collect the additional data they want to include on a particular map. You've probably seen GPS at work in the navigation

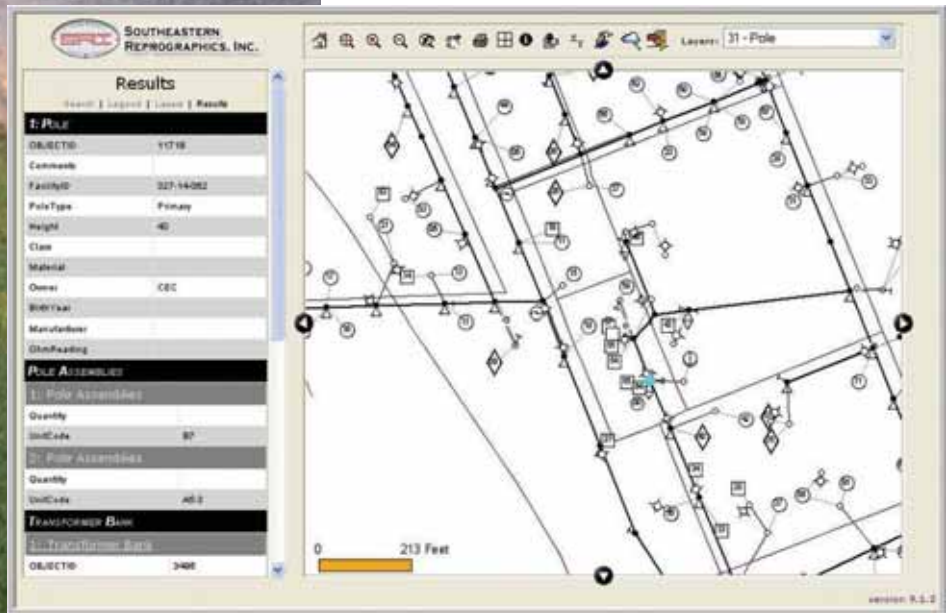


units found in many cars. Those operate the same way as the handheld GPS units used by cartographic data collectors. The units gather information from satellites orbiting Earth, which broadcast their positions to the receivers in longitude and latitude. Then the person holding the receiver can plot his or her position on a map.

The truly revolutionary part of mapmaking is Geographic Information Systems (GIS), a type of database software. Cartographers fill up their GIS databases with any information they want. Then the software creates a map based on information in the database.

Mapping Anything and Everything

There are certain industries that are focused on mapmaking. For example, the cartographers at Maps.com create everything from road maps to



This field technician is inputting information about a damaged light pole into his pen-based computer. The information will be used to create a detailed map (inset) showing electrical distribution in a specific area.

‘This is a hot career choice for the 21st century.’ – Gregory Plumb

globes. They also work with publishing companies to make maps for history textbooks. Another type of company that specializes in cartography is a utility mapping company, such as SRI, which produces maps for electric companies. MapQuest is just one company that offers driving directions online. And using Google Earth (earth.google.com), you can find maps and aerial images of just about every spot on the planet.

Other less obvious industries rely on mapmaking as well. For example, an environmental group may employ cartographers to create maps showing the migration patterns of elk in the Arctic. A data collector follows the herds, tracks their movements with GPS, and enters the information into a GIS database. The database might include information on the number of herds, how many elk were in each herd, even the number of males, females, and young. That type of information—nongeographic data on a map—is called tabular data. The group might then use the “elk map” as part of its argument against allowing oil drilling in a region.

Emergency response agencies also employ cartographers. For example, in October 2003, the latest mapping tools were used to help fight a wildfire in Southern California. A traditional map could have supplied some geographic information firefighters needed—locations of mountains, roads, and woodlands—but it would not have helped them stay on top of a swiftly moving fire. That’s where GIS came in. “Firemen were up in helicopters with

Making A Map

1. Every map starts with a base map—a satellite image or an aerial photo that contains geographic information, such as landforms, roadways, and waterways.



2. Cartographic data collectors use Global Positioning System (GPS) units and pen-based computers to gather the information they want to add to their map.



3. After the data are downloaded to a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) program, the software can print out a map showing the geographic features and additional data.



GPS units flying the perimeter of the fire,” says Ann Johnson, higher education solutions manager for ESRI, a company specializing in GIS design and development. “At the same time, their GPS information was being relayed directly down to the command and control center [so cartographers could update] the maps practically in real time.”

Even retail companies employ cartographers. Now that maps can pack in so much tabular data, such as demographics, a restaurant chain, for example, could use cartographers to help determine where to build its next eatery.

Mapmakers of Tomorrow

“I was one of those kids that used to draw treasure maps all the time,” says Bryan Conant, cartography services manager for Maps.com. “I’ve always found myself daydreaming in front of maps—just dreaming about visiting different places.”

Having an interest in maps is a good start if you’re interested in a career in cartography, but the field attracts a lot of people interested in technology and computer programming as well.

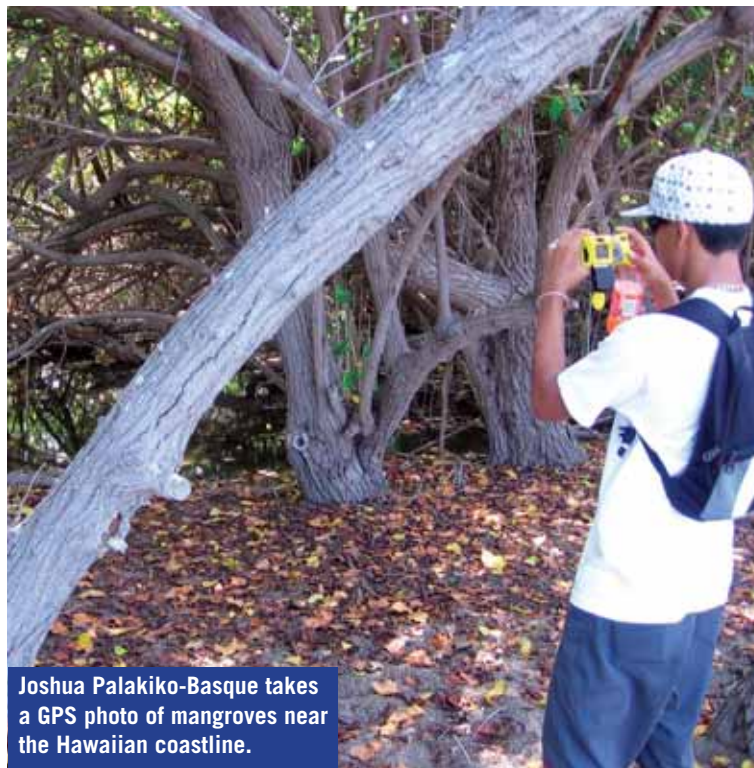
If you’re interested in a career in cartography, take as many geography classes as you can in high school, says Gregory Plumb, chair of the department of cartography and geography at East Central University in Ada, Okla. You should also take computer-programming classes and be good at algebra. Some middle and high schools around the country are even offering their students the chance to use GIS in science or social studies classes.

Continued advances in mapping technology mean the opportunities for careers in cartography are practically limitless. “Right now there are more jobs in this field than there are people to fill them,” says Plumb. “This is a hot career choice for the 21st century.”



Hitting the Beach With GPS

Students at Kealakehe High School in Kailua-Kona, Hawaii, hit the beach last school year—not to surf and sunbathe, but to use high-tech tools to learn important facts about their environment. They used digital cameras equipped with GPSPhotoLinker software. The photos they snapped documented conditions along the beach throughout the school year. The images were then loaded into a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) program to make maps that will help determine if, and to what extent, erosion is claiming the shoreline.



Joshua Palakiko-Basque takes a GPS photo of mangroves near the Hawaiian coastline.

WHAT'S NEW, INT

Picture this: You've landed the interview for your dream job. You're prepared: Your résumé is perfect, you've done your research, and you're sporting a can-do attitude. But when you arrive at the interview, you're hit with something you weren't prepared for. Instead of a one-on-one meeting with the manager, you're being interviewed by *four* people at the same time. Or the manager puts you right to work and says, "This is your interview." Huh?

Employers are going beyond the traditional—and therefore predictable—job interview. "Too many people have been coached on getting past it," says David Maxwell, business department chair at Righetti High School in Santa Maria, Calif. "Using different types of interviews gives the employer a truer picture of the interviewee."

Although teens are usually given a traditional job interview, you could run across some less-traditional types now—and you will be more likely to face them as you get older. Here's what you need to know and do to conquer different types of interviews.

Traditional Interview

Everyone's familiar with the traditional interview: face-to-face and one-on-one. It's still the most common type of interview. As in any job interview, be punctual, make eye contact, answer questions clearly, ask



questions of your own, and showcase your best qualities.

Fanny Zepeda, 17, of San Antonio, scored a cashier position at a restaurant in a traditional interview. Because it was her first job interview, she was nervous. Nevertheless, she decided to just be herself. "That's the only way I would know if the job was right for me," she says. It was. "The manager said I had a positive attitude, was

INTERVIEW?

Get set for more than a traditional Q&A interview.

BY TAMEKIA REECE



very outgoing, and had lots of patience,” Fanny remembers. She was hired on the spot!

Technological Interview

Sometimes employers conduct interviews by phone, e-mail, or even instant message (IM).

For a phone interview, find a quiet location and have a pen, a piece of paper, and your résumé on hand. And stand; don't sit. “When

you stand, you tend to think quicker and sound more confident,” says Peg Hendershot, director of Career Vision, a national career-planning organization.

If you're interviewing online, remember: The interviewer isn't your buddy. “Just because a hiring manager uses IM [or e-mail] doesn't mean the interview isn't formal,” says Penelope Trunk, author of *Brazen Careerist: The New Rules for Success*. “Don't make jokes that you wouldn't make in a face-to-face interview, and your correspondences should be grammatically correct and carefully executed,” she says. No emoticons or LOLs!

Panel Interview

Unless you're seeking an internship or even a high-ranking position, you may not experience a panel interview until after high school. But if you do, relax. A panel interview is just like a traditional interview except instead of one person deciding your fate, many people have input.

As with a traditional interview, always be professional, prepared, and of course, polite. Panel interviews are used to see how well you get along with others and whether you'll fit in with the employees.

Scott Borah, a career-planning teacher and internship coordinator at North Side High School in Fort Wayne, Ind., has been both an interviewee and a panel member. He says panel interviews are often casual and laid-back, which makes it easy to relax (and impress!).

Not sure which panel member your eyes should settle on? “Make eye contact with each member of

What's Your Interviewer's Type?

Just as there are different types of interviews, there are different types of interviewers. Here are four common ones and advice on how to make your approach.

1. Good-Buddy Bob

Style: With Bob, you don't feel as though you're in an interview. He cracks jokes, kicks up his feet, and discusses your mutual love of soccer.

Best Approach: Be personable, but don't slip into a false-friends zone only to have Buddy catch you off guard with a tough



question. If your “buddy” is stuck on soccer, bring the conversation back to the interview by explaining how soccer has made you a great team player off the field and in the workplace.

2. Straight-Laced Sam

Style: Sam is the classic interviewer. He asks and answers questions and gives you the job details, all while being nice but reserved.

'Anytime I answered a question, he'd start doing other things or roll his eyes.'

— Jessica Jacque

the group, but focus on the individual who asked the question,” Hendershot says. Then, “after answering, look around to see if anyone [wants] further clarification,” she adds.

Working Interview

After a traditional interview for a sales position, Kelly Sampson, 22, of Winston-Salem, N.C., was asked to do a working interview—like an on-the-job audition. She was to work one day with the sales team and, depending on her performance, she'd be hired or not hired.

“I [thought] we would be working in an office and making phone calls,” Sampson says. Instead,

she spent the day selling restaurant packages and other items door-to-door—in high heels.

Sampson turned down the job but took away a valuable lesson: “If you're going to a working interview, find out exactly what you'll be doing,” she advises. “Ask questions like ‘Will it be a full workday?’ ‘What responsibilities will I have?’ and ‘How should I prepare?’”

Typically, there's no pay for a working interview, but those few hours can pay off. “If you're offered an opportunity ... essentially you've been hired, or you're pretty close,” says Hendershot. To seal the deal, show up on time, and present yourself as personable and trainable, she says.



Best Approach: Don't get scared stiff. Show Sam a little of your personal flair, but maintain your professionalism to win him over.

3. Checked-Out Christina

Style: During the interview, Christina busies herself with the phone, e-mail, and lunch.

Best Approach: Don't sweat it. Christina may be multitasking but



still paying attention. If you think she's "out," have her check back in by asking a question about the specifics of the job.

4. Bouncing Barbara

Style: One minute you're discussing job responsibilities, then *American Idol*, then salary. With Barbara, the topic is everywhere.

Best Approach:

Preparation. Barbara may throw you off for a second, but if you've prepared well, taking a moment to collect your thoughts should help you bounce back.



Stress Interview

When Jessica Jacque, 19, of Houston, applied for a customer service position, she waited 20 minutes to meet with the personnel manager. When the interview finally started, the manager was rude. "Anytime I answered a question, he'd start doing other things or roll his eyes at my response," Jacque says. "I couldn't believe he was hiring for customer service."

Then she realized he was testing her. "I took a deep breath and acted like his behavior didn't faze me," Jacque says. She aced the test and was hired.

Being asked the same question repeatedly and having a sarcastic or disagreeable interviewer are stress-interview possibilities. "If something like that happens, obviously the position you're interviewing for is stressful—like sales, management, or service—and they want to see your reaction," Borah explains.

Remain calm, keep a sense of humor, and avoid becoming defensive. "If you get frustrated or

stressed out, you won't be hired, because it means you can't handle those situations," Borah says.

Behavioral/Situational Interview

Hendershot says, "Whether you've worked or not, you will be asked about real-life situations." For instance, the employer will ask behavioral questions, such as, "Tell me about a time when you used logic and good judgment to solve a problem." You may also be asked situational questions, such as "How would you deal with an angry customer or coworker?"

Those types of questions may be asked in any type of interview and are meant to glean information about your problem-solving skills and past behavior. Be prepared, and you'll whiz through this type of interview. No, don't memorize answers! Come up with a couple of questions that might be asked, and practice answering in a storylike manner. The prep work will make it easier to wow the employer.



C.O.D.:

Careers On Delivery

With job security, good pay, and benefits, the U.S. Postal Service delivers on employment opportunities.

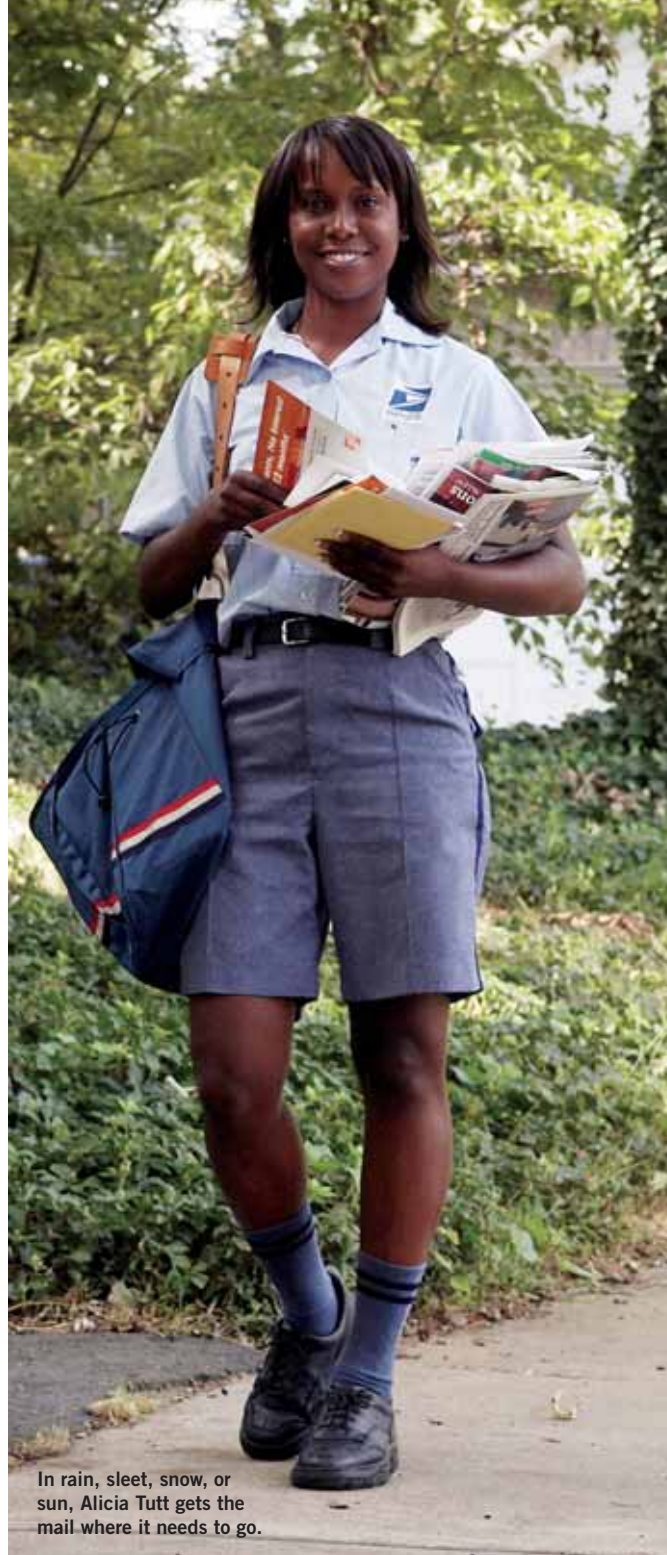
BY ANDREA FAIAD

After graduating from high school, Borys Dudar knew he wanted to find a full-time job that enabled him to support himself and allowed him enough time to pursue his favorite pastime—playing hockey.

Friends told him about job openings at the local U.S. Postal Service (USPS) office in Brooklyn Park, Minn. “I thought it’d be a great place to work,” he recalls. Today, he knows his first impression was right on.

Dudar has worked for the USPS since 1985, when he started as a distribution clerk. He worked late nights and early mornings, sorting incoming and outgoing mail. These days, he’s a retail sales associate at a local post office branch, which means he works directly with the public during regular business hours—selling stamps, mailing packages, and helping people with other postal services.

“The public just sees the mail carriers out on the street, and they think that’s the only type of job, but it’s not,” Dudar says. “There are so many job opportunities within the Postal Service. You can go into sales, be a carrier, do information technology



In rain, sleet, snow, or sun, Alicia Tutt gets the mail where it needs to go.

[or] accounting, whatever. Plus, there are so many opportunities for promotion. It’s amazing.”

The USPS offers a variety of positions that require only a high school diploma. In fact, the Postal Service employs more than 700,000 workers in 300 job categories for positions at nearly 38,000 post offices, branches, and stations throughout the United States, according to the USPS. Starting pay

‘There are so many **opportunities** for promotion. It’s amazing.’

—Borys Dudar



for those positions is typically in the mid-\$20,000s. The USPS offers a full benefits package, including health insurance, paid vacations, and retirement savings. Another perk: job security.

“I call it my safe haven, because you see a lot of [companies] going out of business and downsizing, but the post office is always going to be there,” says Alicia Tutt, a mail carrier in Falls Church, Va.

What Jobs Are Available?

About 80 percent of all jobs with the USPS require that applicants pass an entrance exam, which tests memory and coding and assesses the applicant’s personal characteristics. For the remaining 20 percent of jobs, applicants are rated on the quality of their work experience and their education.

The majority of jobs are mail-handling positions, some of which require working nights and weekends and can be physically demanding.

Carrier—delivers and collects mail on foot or by vehicle, providing customer service in a prescribed

area. A carrier can have an urban, a suburban, or a rural route.

Mail-processing clerk—operates and monitors automated mail processing equipment or manually sorts mail. A clerk collates, bundles, and moves processed mail from one area to another.

Mail handler—loads and unloads containers of mail. A mail handler transports mail and empties equipment throughout the building and opens and empties containers of mail.

Sales, services, and distribution associate—provides direct sales and customer support services in a retail environment.

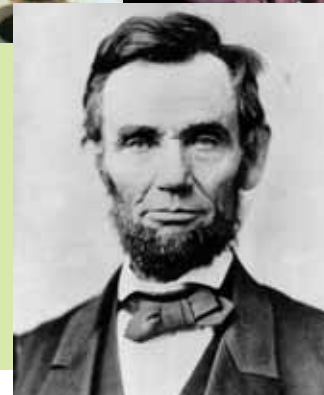
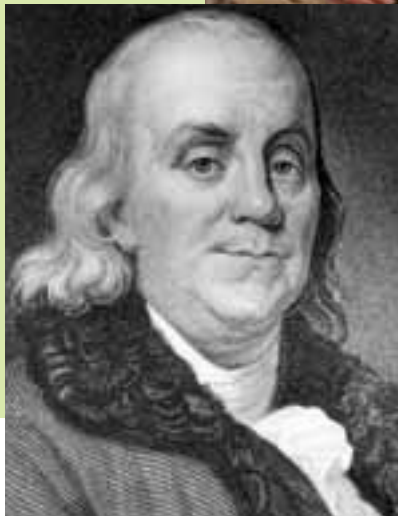
The Postal Service has other opportunities for workers without college degrees, including mechanical, technical, and administrative positions.

Most employees start in part-time, temporary positions and work their way up to full-time, permanent positions. Even though the positions are called “part-time, temporary,” most people in that

FUN FACT

What do Ben Franklin, Abraham Lincoln, Walt Disney, and Bill Nye the Science Guy have in common? They are former post office employees!

Source: U.S. Postal Service



United States Postal Service (USPS) by the Numbers

Career employees:
616,772

Average annual salary:
\$46,388

Average hourly rate without benefits:
\$22.19

Average hourly rate with benefits:
\$37.35

Source: U.S. Postal Service, 2006

Taking the Postal Entrance Exam

Applicants for most Postal Service positions are required to take an entrance exam. It's a test applicants need not fear, however, because many convenient, low-cost ways exist locally and online to prepare for it.

Steve Refinski, now a retail associate in Appleton, Wis., went to his local public library and took out some reference materials to prepare for the exam. Prepping in advance

"helped me achieve a higher, better score," he says.

Refinski scored 91 out of 100 and received five preference points for having served in the U.S. Army. Acceptable test scores range from 70 to 100. The USPS uses the scores to determine the most qualified candidates—typically those who score the highest—from which to select new employees.

For resources, dates, locations of exams, and position openings, visit www.usps.com and click on *Jobs*.



Getting a delivery route can be competitive.

category work a full 40-hour week or more, according to Dennis Damp, author of *Post Office Jobs*. After about a year, part-timers typically become full-time career employees. Employees may be promoted as they gain experience, improve their skills, and complete additional schooling, such as evening college courses.

Seeking Promotion

Alicia Tutt sought an upward career path through the Postal Service. She began part-time work in distribution in 1992 to make some money while in college. "My family all pretty much worked for the post office, I always saw how good it seemed, and since I didn't need a college degree to work there and I was in school at the time, I figured it'd be a good job," she recalls.

She decided to postpone college and work full-time at the post office. After 10 months in distribution, she successfully applied to become a mail carrier. Tutt also did a supervising stint at one point but decided she preferred delivering mail. "I love it," she says. "Delivering mail gives you a chance to get outside, interact with customers, and meet new people. I prefer that to being stuck inside an office, behind a desk all day where you don't get to interact with the outside world."

She recently returned to college to complete a degree and hopes to move into a marketing position with the USPS after graduation. Tutt enthusiastically recommends a career in the Postal Service. "There are so many different avenues you can take," she says. "Just getting your foot in the door is a good start."

Major-ly Unique

Lost in a sea of English majors? Not if you graduate from one of these unusual programs.

BY TRACEY MIDDLEKAUFF

Quick quiz: What are the two most popular college majors? Answer: Business and psychology. But what if those subjects don't thrill you? What if your interests are more specialized than that? Not to worry. Both two- and four-year colleges offer an enormous variety of special majors. Students graduate with skills and knowledge that will truly set them apart in the job market.

Go Organic

Over the past 15 years, organic food has become the hottest sector in agriculture—and it's only getting bigger. Washington State University in Pullman is the first, and currently the only, U.S. school to offer a major in organic agricultural systems. (Some schools, such as the University of Florida, offer organic agriculture concentrations within other majors, such as horticulture.) At Washington State, organic agriculture students take classes in biology, chemistry, soil science, and economics. They get hands-on experience working on a school-affiliated, community-supported organic farm.

Recent grad Jewlee Sullivan's goal is to grow her own food and run a small farm of her own. "I

took a lot of science classes, like soil science and microbiology, and they were all fascinating," she says. "You get to be outside and work with your hands. ... The farm changes every single day."

Getting a degree in organic agriculture doesn't mean you have to become a grower, though, according to John Reganold, regents professor of soil science at Washington State. "There are so many jobs in this field," he says. "You could work in the marketing and business sector, as a buyer or seller for an organic food company ... [or] for the state Department of Agriculture."

Major consumer-products companies, such as Kellogg's, are selling organic foods. Bottom line? "[Organic agriculture is] here, it's now, and it's mainstream," says Reganold, who predicts that other schools will add an organic agriculture major within the next couple of years. Check out the program online at afi.wsu.edu/organic.htm.

Have Some Serious Fun

Does designing a plush toy, a doll, a toy car, or a game sound like a pretty good homework assignment? It's all in a day's work for a toy design major. Just ask Keith Noordry. For his senior thesis project at Otis College of Art and Design in Southern California,



An Otis College student puts the finishing touches on a new toy design.

Noordzy, class of 2007, developed a line of action figures that he describes as “kind of like *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* meets *Mad Max*.”

Students in the toy-design program at Otis take intensive coursework in drawing, model making, brainstorming, concept development, digital rendering, and child psychology. Although toy designers rely on illustration skills, don’t despair if that’s not currently your strong suit. “By the time you get out of here, you will draw well!” says department chair Deborah Ryan. “We don’t want to discourage creative people from applying, just because they don’t think they have the drawing skills yet.”

Graduates of the Otis program have gone on to work at big-name companies such as Crayola, Mattel, and Fisher-Price. Because only two schools offer this major—the other is the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York—admission to Otis is highly competitive. But there are other ways to get into the biz. Many art schools offer a major in industrial design with a concentration in toy design. For more info, check out artschools.org.

Ride Into the Sunset

Dell Hendricks always loved horses. One day, a thought hit him: *I like horses, so why not make a career out of it?* Thanks to the equine studies major at Lamar Community College in Lamar, Colo., that’s exactly what he did. At Lamar, students learn

about everything from equine anatomy and riding to the business of managing a stable full of horses. According to lead instructor J. J. Rydberg, pros who know how to train and care for horses are in big demand. Case in point: Lamar boasts a 100 percent job placement rate.

Hendricks used his degree in horse training and management to build a successful breeding and training business in Texas. He’s also won many prestigious riding awards.

Hendricks loved spending class time riding and training horses. “It was hard work attending classes and doing the program,” he says. “But I enjoyed all of it.” When considering schools, Hendricks says, look for instructors who have been successful in the industry, and make sure the program teaches horse health care.

Dozens of two- and four-year schools offer equine or equestrian studies. For more information, check out www.horseschools.com.



Learning about horse health is an essential part of the equine studies major.

And Now for Something Completely Different ...

Looking for a major as unique as you?
Try on one of these for size!

Adventure Recreation or Expeditionary Studies

Imagine spending a good chunk of your college years backpacking, sea kayaking, and rock climbing—for credit! A handful of schools, including Green Mountain College in Vermont and the State University of New York, Plattsburgh, offer degrees in this field—a great major for aspiring adventure guides.

Puppetry

If you want to get to *Sesame Street*, you will need to hone your puppet chops. Though theater departments at some schools offer courses in puppetry, only two—the University of Connecticut and West Virginia University—offer a bachelor of fine arts degree and training in such areas as puppet production techniques and marionette performance.

Bagpiping

Not surprisingly, only one school in the United States—Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh—offers a bachelor of fine arts degree in bagpiping. And it's not exactly the most popular major on campus. At one point, only one student was enrolled in the program.

Popular Culture

You have a big exam tomorrow, so you're staying up all night to watch TV. Irresponsible? Not if your major is popular culture, which is offered at Bowling Green State University in Ohio. A few schools, such as the University of Southern California, offer pop culture as a minor. But it's not just all about TV; along with

going to class, reading, and writing papers, you'll have to watch movies and listen to music too!

Traditional Eastern Arts

If nothing else, you'll graduate from this degree program feeling very mellow. Offered only at Narops University in Boulder, Colo., the major offers three concentrations: T'ai-chi Ch'uan, yoga teacher training, or aikido. Class work includes meditation and traditional Eastern chanting.

A Singular Major

As an undergraduate at Indiana University in Bloomington in the 1970s, Will Shortz came up with a special major for himself: enigmatology, the study of puzzles. His creativity paid off; Shortz went on to become the editor of *The New York Times* crossword puzzle. Many schools offer tailor-made majors, often called individualized-major programs, for those students whose academic interests are truly one-of-a-kind.



Creative? You? Yes!

BY SUSAN EISNER ELEY

Most jobs require a lot of creativity. The good news: You can tap into your own inventive ideas. Here's how.

Creativity is important in just about every company and every field. Obviously, a person who works at an advertising agency needs to be creative. But so does someone who works at a bank or a hospital. Surprised? No matter what the position, employers want people who can come up with innovative ideas and unique ways to solve problems.

Are *you* creative? If you think you're not, think again. This time, think outside the box.

We'll bust a few myths about creativity here so you can learn to tap into your own creative reserves, boost your confidence, have fun, and prepare yourself to be a power-thinking superstar in whatever field you choose.

Myth: Creativity is found only in the arts.

Fact: Creativity shows itself in every field—including science, politics, and business.

You create not only when you produce a science fair project, compose a song, or write a story but also when you design sneakers on Nike's Web site, construct a page on MySpace, or make an iPod playlist.

What does it mean to be creative? Creativity is the combination of talent and effort that produces an outcome or a product that is both novel and useful, according to Jonathan Plucker, a professor of cognitive science at Indiana University. In other words, the original idea alone is not enough. The key is bringing that idea to life.

Myth: Only geniuses are creative.

Fact: Everyone is creative.

There's no gene for creativity, and creating something useful doesn't require genius. One of the most important aspects of being creative is persistence—the ability to take on a task and stick with it until the end. For example, look at 18-year-old Hardeep Singh of Waterbury, Conn. For a science bowl, he tried to build a fuel-cell car that ran on water and electricity. "I had taken lots of science in school but am not a science genius," says Singh. "I didn't think I could do it at first, but I tried every possible idea until I figured it out." He later entered his car in the 2006 ©BEA™ contest, a national competition organized by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office and the National Inventors Hall of Fame Foundation. And guess what? Genius or not, Singh took first place in the high school category.

Myth: Being creative won't improve your life.

Fact: Creativity enriches life.

Challenging yourself to find new answers can boost intellect and make you more of a risk taker, says Keith Sawyer, an associate professor of education at Washington University in St. Louis and the author of several books on creativity. The ability to freely think through a problem and commit to a solution makes a person better equipped to handle life, ultimately increasing success and career opportunities. Take the example of 16-year-old



Emily Tsacomas blends dance with her everyday life.

Emily Tsacomas from California. A ballet dancer since age 4, Emily says her dedication to her art spills over into her schoolwork, giving her focus and drive. "Being comfortable with my creativity helps me a lot in dancing, especially during those situations where we're asked to improvise," she explains. "I used to choke up when I was put on the spot like that, but now I realize that I've got to be confident and just go for it. I may not come up with the best steps ever, but when there's limited time, anything is better than nothing."

Myth: Creative output comes as an "aha!" moment.

Fact: There's no magic. Creativity can almost always be traced back to hard work.

"Even when someone thinks an idea for a solution came as a sudden flash of brilliance, his or her mind has actually been working on solving the problem for a long time," says Sawyer. Nick Schwaderer, 18, of Superior, Mont., dreamed of having a radio station since he was 10. After his school gave him the green light to tinker with some old radio equipment, Schwaderer says, "I spent lots of days on my school's hot metal roof, working with the equipment. I almost gave up. I felt dumb, and people were starting to criticize me."

With encouragement and help, he built a community-wide station, KTGC. "The harder I tried to accomplish it, the harder it was to give up my dream," says Schwaderer, one of 10 national honorees of the 2006 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards for his achievement.

Creative Career Challenge 1

You have just been granted \$5,000, an old ice-cream truck (still in running condition), and access to free advice from an industrial designer.

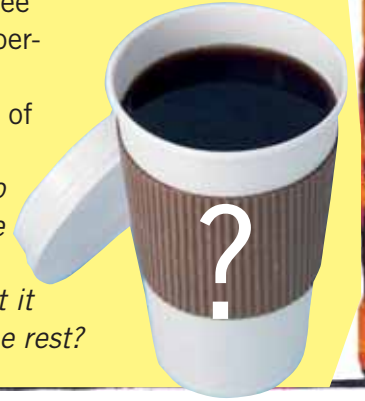
What business would you start with those resources?



Creative Career Challenge 2

Designer coffee shops are super-popular with java-questors of all ages.

If you were to open a coffee shop, how would you set it apart from the rest?



Get the Creative Juices Flowing

Here are five steps to bolster innovative thinking.

1. Welcome new experiences. Unlock your mind by traveling, chatting with new people, reading, or trying new activities.
2. Find a passion or pursue a hobby. Deepen your skills in that area.
3. Read and learn about the lives of people you admire.
4. If your mind is blocked, take a walk. Exercise, fresh air, and a change of scenery often help.
5. Allow all ideas to flow.

Bring your own style to any pursuit.



Myth: Creative people are loners.

Fact: Creative people thrive when they brainstorm and work with others.

“The idea of the lone creative genius is a myth,” says Plucker. “Even [Albert] Einstein bounced ideas for his most famous work off his wife, and Michelangelo’s Sistine Chapel was painted with the help of many assistants!”

The perspectives that spring from many minds considering the same problem are invaluable. “When I felt discouraged and wanted to give up ... someone would spark an idea I hadn’t thought of, and I would be reinspired,” says Schwaderer.

Get Fired Up

You can enhance your creativity too. It helps to find someone who inspires you, says Susan Keller-Mathers, an assistant professor at the International Center for Studies in Creativity at Buffalo State College in New York. Having a role model helps you shape a future snapshot of yourself. For example, New Yorker Tyler Faux, 16, produces and sells software programs for Palm users through his company, Ludus Technologies. Tyler was inspired to learn to write code after watching a program about Bill Gates.

Don’t underestimate your creative potential. You may have yet to realize it! Look to other people for inspiration and support. Surrounding yourself with people who aren’t afraid to test new ideas can lead to truly awesome discoveries.





Ecology By DESIGN

BY BERYL GOLDBERG

Jenny Hwa built her clothing business on principle.

You're good to the planet. You recycle, turn off lights, and wear Earth-friendly clothes. Wait—Earth-friendly clothes? What are those? Do they even look good?


They do. Jenny Hwa, a New York City-based fashion designer, makes it her business. Hwa owns a line of women's clothing that also helps the planet.

Hwa, 28, trained at New York's Fashion Institute of Technology. She honed her skills working with designers at major clothing companies, such as Kate Spade, Armani Exchange, and Calypso. "Working with these designers gave me a great understanding of the craft and the designer's role," says Hwa. But, she adds, "I began to realize these companies were not dealing with social or environmental issues as part of their work model." Hwa envisioned a business that wouldn't waste resources or abuse the environment.

Hwa's 3-year-old company, Loyale, is that business. The name Loyale defines the company:

loyal both to the environment and to style. Loyale clothing is manufactured in the United States—no wasting resources on imports—using sustainable fabrics and techniques. The office is supplied with recycled products. "A few years ago, naysayers claimed Loyale wouldn't be viable," says Hwa. But her designs—a departure from the "formless and boring" stereotype she says eco-clothing can carry—earned praise from editors of top magazines, including *Elle* and *Jane*.

Hwa had challenges besides naysayers. "I must have spent a thousand hours on Google searching the globe for suppliers. There were a lot of dead ends," she says. Her research paid off. One recent find was jersey fabric made from bamboo, a renewable resource made without pesticides. Hwa spins the fabric into dresses, tops, and swimwear.

Hwa is realistic about her business's impact on the planet. She notes that her business is "a part of the message that encourages the small steps people can take: buying eco-fashion, recycling, and supporting responsible companies." 

Where Do I Go With

Do you wonder how a kitten purrs, why a leaf changes color, or what makes a person sneeze? A career in biology might satisfy your curious nature. Biology is the study of life. Biologists look for ways to help people, plants, and animals live longer, healthier lives. Because there are so many forms of life, biologists tend to focus on one form or another. Most research jobs require at least a master's degree. Whatever path you take in biology, "do not underestimate good communication skills ... and mathematics," advises Samantha Katz, director of education and outreach for the American Institute of Biological Sciences. Much of science involves communicating what you've learned to other people. "Biology is fun. Being a scientist is fun," Katz notes. "There are many ways to be a scientist." Here are just a few.

OUTSIDE THE LAB

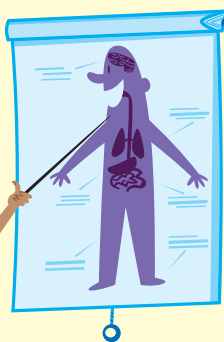
Genetic counselors work with families to analyze inheritable conditions and identify the risk of birth defects. They need good people skills, as they counsel individuals and families and provide information about the conditions in question. Genetic counselors also need to be good at math, as they often work with numbers to calculate odds.

Science/technical editors rely on their expertise to edit professional journals, consumer science magazines, and educational materials.

Environmental lawyers help save the planet, one court case at a time. They fight for the rights of beavers, spotted owls, redwood trees, and other endangered species.

Nurses need to be well versed in biology; they need to understand how the human body works and how medicine and environmental elements can affect the body.

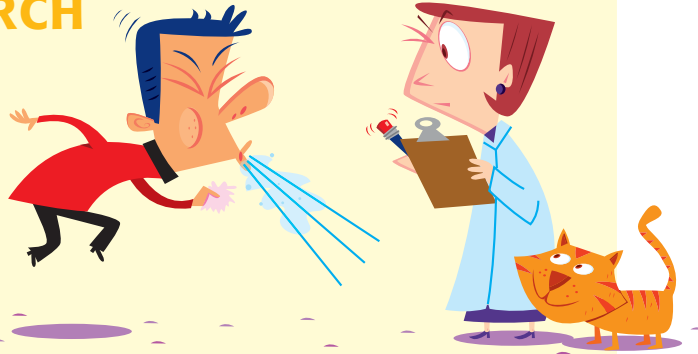
Of course, **science teachers** are *always* needed, especially in high schools. "It's so important to have well-trained educators," says Katz. "That's where the next generation of scientists comes from."



th **Biology?**

CUTTING-EDGE RESEARCH

Human biology is closely related to the field of medicine—all doctors must know that the knee bone is connected to the shinbone. However, some doctors spend less time with patients and more time conducting biological research. **Pathologists** look for the causes of and cures for diseases. **Oncologists** study cells that form tumors, hoping to discover ways to cure or prevent cancer. **Immunologists** search for ways to treat allergies and to improve our ability to resist diseases.



Industrial biologists, also known as **biotechnologists**, will enjoy many job opportunities in the coming years as they combine biological research and technology to make useful new products. The products include new drugs, more resilient crops, and renewable biofuels, such as methane and ethanol. **Bioinformatics** is a growing field that creates technology to help improve research.

Microbiologists study tiny microbes to learn their effects on other living creatures. This research helps scientists develop medicines and vaccines, improve food and water supplies, or create consumer products such as disinfecting cleansers.



UP CLOSE WITH NATURE

Natural resources specialists manage and protect wildlife, fish, habitats, and recreation areas. **Wildlife biologists** examine animals in their natural habitats. They study whether a species is thriving or dying off and offer clues as to the reasons. Environmental changes that affect animals, such as global warming or pollution, can also affect people—wildlife biologists are sometimes the first to detect those changes. **Park rangers** keep parks safe and sound while teaching visitors all about natural wonders.



Career World Looks Back



Up, Up, and Away

Beginning in the 19th century, cartographers took to the skies in hot air balloons to get aerial views of terrain. Then they made their maps by hand. Today, cartographers rely on satellite images and a variety of other high-tech tools to make maps. To learn more about careers in high-tech cartography—balloon trips are optional—turn to page 12.