



SELF: CONNECTING CAREERS TO PERSONAL INTERESTS

Essential Question: *How Can I Connect My Interests to My Work?*

Learning Targets:

Students will:

- Brainstorm possible connections of personal interests and careers.
- Categorize jobs to career clusters.
- Apply an exploratory mindset to career clusters.

Lesson Overview

This lesson requires students to move beyond simply identifying their sparks and interests; students will now begin to recognize how their unique talents can align to careers. Using the framework of career clusters, young people will explore many unique careers and how their specific strengths may be applied to different industries. This lesson concludes the series of Self Lens Lessons by inviting young people to research careers relating to a cluster and one of their specific strengths.

Lesson Agenda

Opening (10 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connection, Connection Brainstorm (5 min) • Career Cluster Activity (5 min)
Work Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career Cluster Sort (20 min) • Spin and Explore (25 min)
Closure (5 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Popcorn

Materials

- Young Professional student packet
- Projector
- Crazy Career Paths infographic
- Career Clusters graphic
- Student computers/technology
- Young Professionals Portfolio

FACILITATION NOTES

Respect for All Work. In the discussion of jobs and career, it is important to speak of all work with respect. Some students may come from families or neighborhoods where jobs are more “normal” than careers. It is important not to layer bias on this subject, but present it in a respectful manner where the outcome is having youth informed about opportunities and options—and the choices and decisions they will need to make to access these.

IN ADVANCE

- Prepare <Career Cluster Sort> materials.
- Reserve proper technology space for your class.
- Bookmark opening activity website to project: <https://www.themuse.com/advice/7-crazy-career-paths-and-what-they-pay>.

Vocabulary

Content	Tier II
economy, post-secondary, degree	opportunity

Opening (10 min)

Connection, Connection Brainstorm (5 min)

Ask the YPs to brainstorm four personal interests on the <Connection, Connection> sheet.



Sometimes we have rigid ideas of careers and jobs. The world of work is like our world: a diverse ecosystem filled with both common and niche opportunities. A niche is a role that fills a very specific purpose. Let's look at a few careers that fill a niche.

1. **Project:** <https://www.themuse.com/advice/7-crazy-career-paths-and-what-they-pay>.

This activity is less about job titles and “correct answers” than beginning the process of developing an exploratory mindset. Young people often have little understanding of the diversity of work and various niches. This activity helps to connect their interests to a wide variety of careers.

Career Cluster Activity (5 min)

Not all jobs are niche jobs—sometimes we just don't think of them. When we think of hospitals, we often think of doctors and nurses. Hospitals, however, function like small cities. They employ graphic designers, IT specialists, chefs, and sound technicians. Connecting your interest to different career fields allows you to think flexibly about work and connecting possible careers to your interests—as well as think about the many possibilities that exist. I will state a career cluster—a broad category of careers. You will brainstorm how your interest could be tied to this career. Don't worry if you don't know a job, you can describe a connection as well. Imagine my interest was drawing and illustration (I love to make comics in my spare time). Let's brainstorm together how my interests could connect to work across career fields.

1. **Model** the process. *Here is your first challenge: How can my interest connect to food and natural resources?*
 - **Use** wait time. Then ask for volunteers to share ideas.
2. **Repeat** with other career clusters (*To hospitality and tourism? To public safety?*).
 - **Listen for** examples such as: *Lettering restaurant signs, illustrating menus or cookbooks. Creating tourist maps of cities, working with websites. Making public service announcements, posters, or pamphlets.*
 - **Transition.** *Now it is your turn.*



The career clusters may introduce some new vocabulary. This may present a challenge for ELLs. Be prepared to explain examples. Using Career Cluster Cards will help students visualize and conceptualize careers in more detail using words, images, and examples.

3. **Call out** a career cluster (Business, Architecture and Construction, Government, Health, etc.).

- **Have** students either think independently or talk in pairs to help identify one connection for each of their three interests. Time permitting, repeat with another career cluster.

4. **Debrief.** Invite students to share their interests and how it connected to each “challenge category.” Was anything surprising?



Work Time

Career Cluster Sort (20 min)

1. **Project** the <Career Clusters> graphic.
2. **Explain** that career clusters are a way to group and organize careers. Nationally, there are 16 career clusters, though each state may approach the clusters with slight variation.

- Agriculture
- Food & Natural Resources
- Architecture & Construction
- Arts, A/V Technology & Communications
- Business Management & Administration
- Education & Training
- Finance
- Government & Public Administration
- Health
- Science
- Hospitality & Tourism
- Human Services
- Information Technology
- Law
- Public Safety, Corrections & Security
- Manufacturing
- Marketing
- Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics
- Transportation, Distribution & Logistic

1. **Distribute** the <Career Cluster Sort>.

Lenses: Self
Pathways to Prosperity Network



It is very common for middle school age youth to have a limited understanding of the different careers that exist. Consider a Career Cluster Sort as a way to start to talk about careers, build background knowledge, and develop vocabulary.



Having students work collaboratively allows them to discuss the world of work, make connections, and reflect on their interests.

2. **Ask** students to collaborate in groups to match different jobs and careers to their most likely career cluster.
3. Remind them to read the description of work to help them make the best match.
 - The objective is for students to **broaden** their understanding of careers and the world of work—getting the “right match” is not as important as their conversation and thinking.
 - **Encourage** students with deep background knowledge to justify their match.
 - Each card has jobs that may be new to them, along with salaries and position descriptions, and educational requirements.
4. **Debrief:** *Were there any careers that you did not know about? Any that seemed cool or interesting?*



The purpose of this activity is to support an exploratory mindset and to encourage students to look at the world of careers with a creative approach. As they brainstorm and learn about connections between their interests and the world of work, the future becomes a more inviting place where they can contribute.



Spin and Explore (25 min)



1. **Invite** students to turn to the **<Wheels of Fortune>**. In wheel one, have them fill in each “spoke” with one of their interests. The other wheel has one of the career clusters. Then, using a paperclip, have them spin and record one entry from each wheel.
2. Next, **invite** the YPs to brainstorm at least three careers that connect to both. For example, the interest of “art/drawing” and the career cluster of “Health” could result in many different careers: art therapist, graphic designer for a hospital, medical illustrator, recreation therapy, etc. The YPs will most likely need a computer to assist.
 - If the YPs are new to research, **model** inserting the term “art” and “health career” into Google. Note results of search. Ask what other terms could be used to widen the results.
3. Finally, **direct** them to choose one job/career from their list and research.
4. **Repeat** either in class or as homework.

Closure (5 min)

Popcorn

As a closure, have students “popcorn” out one of their **<Wheels of Fortune>** jobs. Ideally, these can be recorded in a visible place so that the diversity of careers can be seen by all.

Extension: Invite the YPs to transform their research into a portfolio entry.

School to Home Connection



Play the <Wheels of Fortune> with someone from home. Record their interests. Have them spin the wheels. Then brainstorm jobs and careers that fit the resulting combination—use the internet if needed to help generate careers and jobs.



Name:

Date:

SELF: Why is it Important to Know Your Spark?

Today's Learning Objectives:

I can:

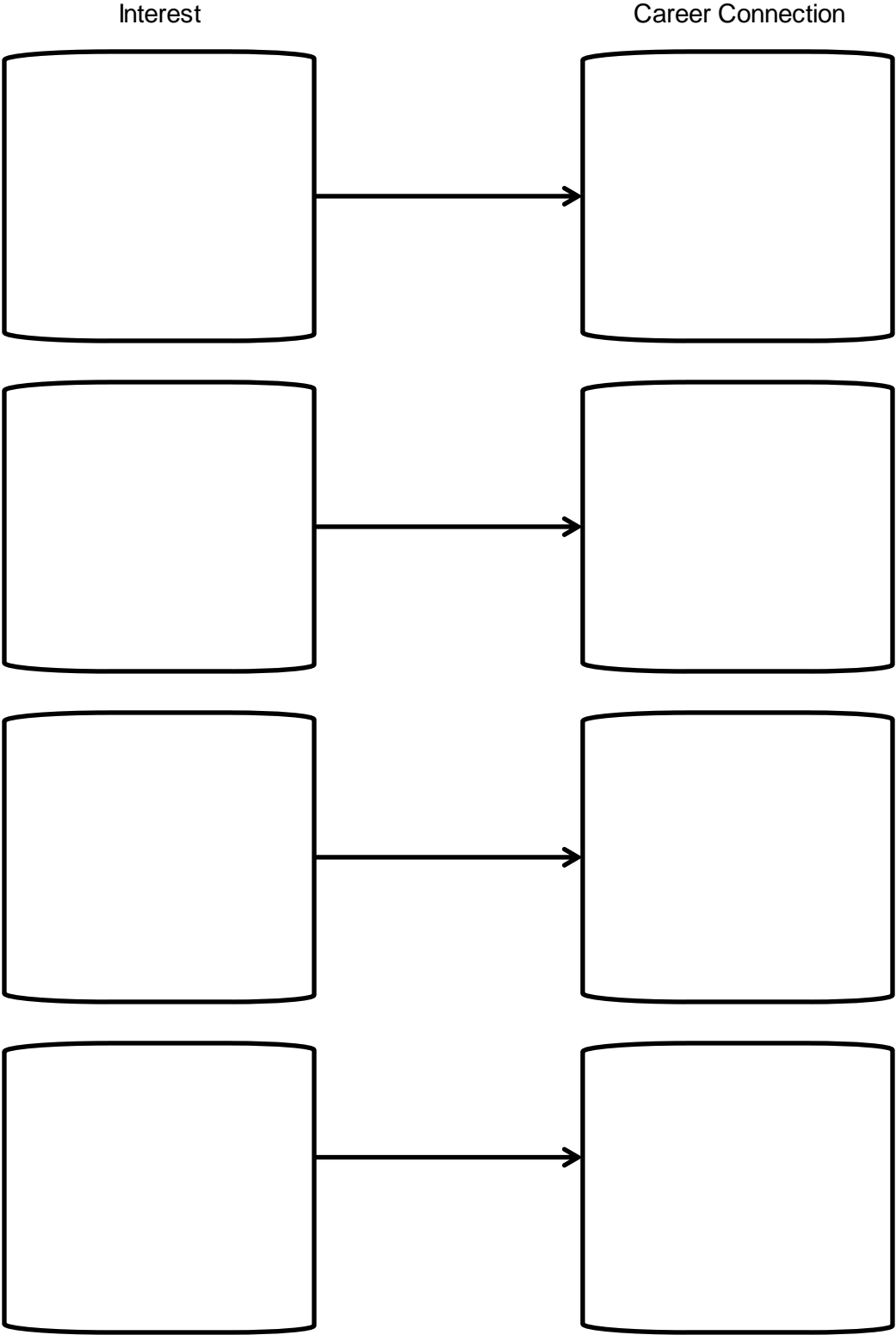
- Brainstorm possible connections of personal interests to careers.
- Categorize jobs to career clusters.
- Apply an Explorer's Mindset to career clusters.

This lesson moves beyond simply identifying my sparks and interests; I will now be able to recognize how my unique talents can align to possible careers. Using the framework of career clusters, I will explore many unique careers and how my specific strengths may be applied to different industries. This lesson concludes the series of Self Lens Lessons by allowing me to research careers relating a cluster and one of my specific strengths.

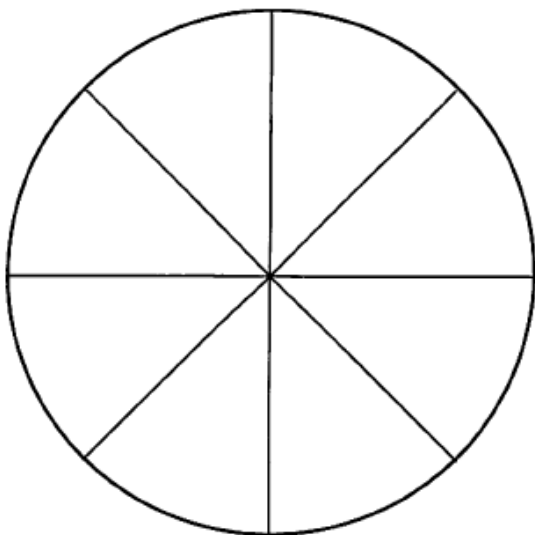
Today's Activities:

- Connection, Connection Brainstorm
- Career Cluster Sort
- Spin and Explore
- Popcorn Share

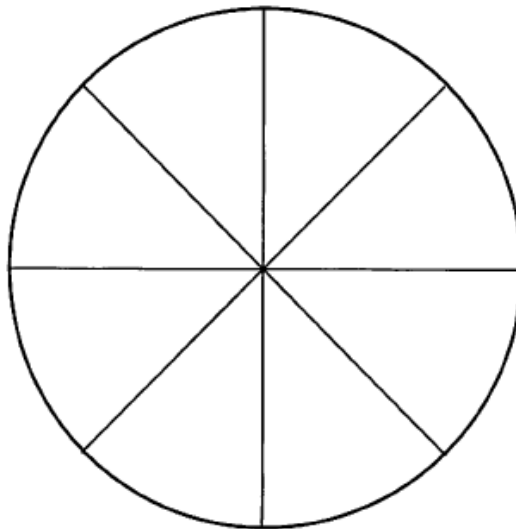
Connection, Connection



Wheel 2



Wheel 1



Spin Wheel One: _____

Spin Wheel Two: _____

Select one to research:

Spin Wheel One: _____

Spin Wheel Two: _____

Brainstorm jobs that connects these:

Select one to research:

Job title:

Description:

Skills Needed:

Education Required:

Salary:

Personal Rating: 1-4 stars

Brainstorm jobs that connects these:

Research a job that connects these.

Job title:

Description:

Skills Needed:

Education Required:

Salary:

Personal Rating: 1-4 stars