Career Planning Checklist: Middle School

Directions: Read the Career Planning checklists below, and then complete the questions that begin at the bottom of page 2.

- Be a good student and work hard to get good grades.
  
  You may wonder how your grades in middle school can affect your future career path. Believe it or not, your grades count a lot. Grades are the only way colleges, employers, and others in positions of authority can objectively measure your performance.

  Middle school is the perfect time to identify what kind of student you are and where there’s room for improvement. You may even want to talk to your teachers about ways you can better your grades. If you wait until high school, it will be too late.

  There is simply no downside to getting good grades.

- Develop good study habits.
  
  Not only do good study habits lead to good grades, they provide the foundation for a lifetime of learning. After all, learning doesn’t stop when you finish high school or college...

  A good way to improve your study habits is to figure out how you learn best. For example, if you’re a visual learner, flash cards may help you study more effectively. And if you’re an auditory learner, it may help you to read your assignments out loud. Knowing how you learn will make it easier for you to absorb new information.

- Do your homework.
  
  Homework may seem like a hassle, especially when you’ve got so many other things on your plate, like soccer practice and marching band. But doing homework is part of your job as a student.

  Homework is a great way to show that you can get things done without supervision. (When you’re part of the working world, many work-related responsibilities will seem no different from homework.) So get in to the habit of doing your homework and finishing it on time.

  Homework is practice.

- Read books, magazines, and online publications for fun.
  
  Don’t limit learning to just your schoolwork. Reading in your free time, just for fun, will help you increase your vocabulary, reading comprehension, and reading speed.

  Reading for fun also allows you to study topics that interest you but may not be taught in the classroom—maybe skateboarding or gaming. Do some research on your own and stay up to date on what’s going on in that field. You never know when a hobby may turn into something more.

  The more interests you have, the more opportunities you have.

- Get involved in extracurricular activities.
  
  When admissions counselors or employers review your application, your extracurricular activities—sports, music, clubs—give them a glimpse into your character. That’s because extracurricular activities require skills you won’t necessarily learn in class: teamwork, leadership, responsibility.

  Such real-world skills contribute to the strength of your character. And the stronger your character, the more attractive you are as a potential candidate.

  Extracurricular activities can help you strengthen your character.
#1 Rank the following in order of which you think you are best at (1), to which you need to improve the most on (6). Just type the numbers to the left of each one.

____ Be a good student and work hard to get good grades
____ Develop good study habits.
____ Do your homework.
____ Read books, magazines, and online publications for fun.
____ Get involved in extracurricular activities.
____ Identify several career areas that may interest you.

#2 From your rankings, which of these three areas do you think you excel at or are good at, and give an explanation for how you are good in these areas for each one you chose. Give examples.

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#3 From your rankings, which of these three areas could you use the most work on, and for each area explain what you can do to help you improve in these areas.

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