

# Career backup plans

14

Recommended:  
Year 14



Length:  
105 minutes

## About this lesson

To identify back-up options, students will investigate careers similar to those they have expressed interest in. They learn why it's important to plan alternative routes, and research how a post-16 learning pathway can lead to more than one career option.

## Learning objectives

By the end of this lesson students will:

- investigate related careers
- understand the importance of career backup plans
- explore potential backup careers for themselves
- research learning pathways as a way to identify backup careers

## Driving question

Does having a backup plan mean giving up my dream career?

## Future-ready skills

Planning

Skill building

Critical thinking

Decision making

## Lesson breakdown

30

minutes

### Activity 1: Similar careers

In this activity, students will review the career profile of their dream career; investigate related careers that may match their interests, skills, or aspirations; and reflect on why these may be good alternate routes.

55

minutes

### Activity 2: Xello lesson: Career backup plans

Direct students to complete the Xello lesson: **Career backup plans** to help them understand the importance of exploring alternate routes and prepare for unexpected obstacles to give them confidence to achieve their goals.

20

minutes

### Activity 3: Research backup careers

In this activity, students will research education or training programmes for a saved career and explore careers related to that programme that they'd consider for a backup plan.

## Xello entry point

Students need to save 3 careers before starting this lesson. It's recommended they've completed Matchmaker and Xello's lessons **Explore career matches** and **Discover learning pathways**.

## Vocabulary

- Career-related skills
- Transferable skills
- Obstacles
- Limiting factors
- Alternative routes

## Benchmarks & Curriculum

**Gatsby Benchmark 2:** learning from career and labour market information

# Activity 1: Similar careers

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## Inquiry prompts

- Are there alternative routes to my dream career?
- Can I feel fulfilled in more than one career?

## Before you begin

- Students will need to be able to access their saved careers and **My notes** cards in Xello.

## Teaching strategies

In this activity, students will review the career profile of their dream career; investigate similar careers that may match their interests, skills, or aspirations; and reflect on why these may be good alternative routes.

- 1 Provide the [instructions](#) on the next page to your students.

## Materials required

- [Student instructions](#)
- Computer or tablet with internet access

## Artefacts

Students will update their saved careers, adding details to the **Likes and dislikes** and **My notes** cards for 3 saved careers.

## Similar careers

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### Student instructions

Whether you have sights on one career path for yourself or are still trying to decide your dream career, recognizing the skills and interests you'd like to use in your future is an excellent way to identify and prepare for alternative career paths.

- 1 Review your saved careers in Xello. Based on the profile information and your rating of important factors, which one would you list as your top career choice? For this career, update how you feel about it (**Love it, Like it a lot, or It's a possibility**).
- 2 Review the career profile and add 3 likes to the **Likes and dislikes** card.
- 3 Look at the list of similar careers on the career profile and explore those that interest you.
- 4 Evaluate the similar careers and select 2 that you'd genuinely consider as alternative options to your top choice. After saving each career, select how you feel about this career, and record the following in the **Explore this career** section:
  - Add 2 ideas to the **Likes and dislikes** card to justify why this is a possible backup career. Hints:
    - Is the education or training required easier to achieve?
    - Is the career outlook in higher demand?
    - Are my skills and interests a strong match?
    - How could this career lead me to my dream job?
  - Write a short reflection in the **My notes** card:
    - What makes this career similar to your top choice?
    - What would be most fulfilling about working in this career?
    - What would you look forward to most if you worked in this career?

## Activity 2 - Xello Lesson: Career backup plans

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Length:  
55 minutes

### About this activity

In Activity 1, students reviewed the career profile of their dream career; investigated related careers that may match their interests, skills, or aspirations; and reflected on why these may be good alternate routes.

In this activity students will complete the Xello lesson **Career backup plans**, where they will learn the importance of career backup plans, and explore potential backup careers for themselves.

### Inquiry prompts

- Describe a time you had to resort to a backup plan.
- Do you think there's only one suitable career for a person?
- Why is a backup career plan important?
- What kinds of obstacles may prevent you from achieving your first-choice career?
- Agree or disagree: Planning for a backup career means you won't be as driven to achieve your first-choice career.

### Before you begin

Before diving in with your students:

1. Create a copy or download the [Career backup plans slide presentation](#) to use as a helpful teaching aid before and after the Xello lesson.
2. Review the slides (including the speaker notes section) for suggested discussion strategies and prompts.
3. Update slide 5 of the presentation with your students' Xello sign in format. If you don't know your students' Xello login format check out [Sign in to Xello](#) for support.

### Teaching strategies

Use the following strategies to set your students up for success:

- 1 Before students start the Xello lesson, take 5 minutes to have them review and consider the inquiry prompts from the **Warm up** activity slide of the [Career backup plans slide presentation](#), or choose your own. Advise students to keep these questions in mind as they complete the lesson. You will revisit these questions with them in the **Exit activity** afterwards.
- 2 Help your students log in to their Xello account. Project your screen as you model how to navigate to the lesson using your demo student account. From the student dashboard, click on a lesson to get started. If the lesson you want isn't visible, access it by selecting **View all lessons** below the lessons shown.
- 3 Students finished early? If students have time after completing the Xello lesson, encourage them to return to each of the alternate careers they saved in **Activity 1** and complete this additional reflection in the **My notes card**:  
How does the salary range of my backup choice compare to my top career

### Materials required

- Computers or tablets with internet access
- Whiteboard/projector
- [Career backup plans slide presentation](#)

### Prerequisites

- Save 3 careers

### Artefacts

Students will complete the Xello lesson: **Career backup plans**.

## Activity 2 - Xello Lesson: Career backup plans

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choice?

- 4 Once students have completed the Xello lesson, return to the [Career backup plans slide presentation](#) to have students revisit the inquiry prompts you posed at the beginning of class.
- 5 **Classroom discussion strategy: Round robin:** Lead a round robin style discussion that gets each person to share their answer to the inquiry prompt: What kinds of obstacles may prevent you from achieving your first-choice career?

**OPTIONAL:** Document the responses. What observations can be drawn about them? What conclusions can be made?

## Activity 3: Research backup careers

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Length:  
20 minutes

### Inquiry prompts

- How will post-16 education or training influence my career opportunities?
- How likely is it that post-16 education or training will lead me to my dream career?

### Before you begin

- Students will need to be able to review the career profile of their dream career in Xello.
- Create a Xello **Assignment** for your students called **Career backup plan exploration**. Include a sentence asking them to share the weblink to the school's course or apprenticeship they researched in the text box, as well as details about the related careers as noted in the student instructions section of this lesson.

### Teaching strategies

In this activity, students will research education or training programmes for a saved career and identify related careers within that learning pathway that they'd consider for a backup plan.

- 1 Provide the [instructions](#) on the next page to your students.

### Materials required

- [Student instructions](#)
- Computer or tablet with internet access

### Artefacts

Students will save one post-16 education programme linked to a career of interest and add a weblink to the school's course or apprenticeship in a Xello **Assignment** with details about associated employment opportunities.

## Research backup careers

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### Student instructions

As much as you plan and focus on a goal, you never know what life might throw at you, sending you on a new course. For example, you may enrol in a post-16 course with one career goal in mind, but your learning and development may lead you in a different direction. For one saved career:

- 1 Read the **Education & training** section of the career profile.
- 2 Explore a few of the **Related courses** and save one that interests you.
- 3 Look at the **Related careers** list on the course profile, are there any new careers listed here that interest you? If yes, review the profile and save it.
- 4 Open a new browser tab and search for the course and school webpage. Most courses will describe or list after graduation employment opportunities or potential career paths. Are there any new careers listed here that interest you?
- 5 Back in Xello, complete the **Assignment** called **Career backup plan exploration**. Add the weblink to the school's course profile page and include details about the related careers in the text box. Then spend some time exploring this career in Xello or online, evaluating whether this career would make a good backup plan or not.