



Introduction

What This Book Can Do for You

Once upon a time, the U.S. Department of Labor created a book with descriptions of the vast majority of jobs in the market. The book was called the *Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOH)*, and it became the most widely used source of career information around. It has helped millions of people explore their career options and make educated decisions. The book is still the most popular source of career information, and it is updated every two years.

It is also more than 700 pages long and weighs as much as a watermelon. Undoubtedly the *OOH* is so popular because of the wealth of information it offers, but it can also be intimidating for some readers. Those people who are in the early stages of career exploration may not even know where to get started with such a thick book.

If it were only possible to squeeze the most pertinent information out of the *OOH* and put it in a format that was simpler to use, easier to read, and more accessible for the everyday job seeker. A book that contained all of the relevant content, but none of the excess, trimmed down for people like you and me.

A book like this one.

Like the book it was based on, this EZ version of the *OOH* presents information on nearly 270 major jobs, and you are very likely to work in one or more of them during your life. Also like the *OOH*, the *EZ OOH* groups similar jobs together, making it simple to explore related jobs you might not know about. Unlike the *OOH*, the job descriptions in this book are only one page long. Yet they still contain all the necessary information about earnings, working conditions, and job opportunities, as well as information the *OOH* doesn't include, such as personality types best suited to the career and interesting facts related to each job.

This introduction will give you information to help you understand and use the book. In looking over these job descriptions, we suggest that you consider every one that interests you. Remember that you are exploring job *possibilities*. The information presented will help you discover what jobs match your personality and what additional training or education you will need to do that job. If a job requires more training or education than you currently have, consider it anyway. After all, there are many ways to finance an education.

Once upon a time there was a golden-haired girl who stumbled upon a house in the woods. She apparently didn't have very good manners because she started eating, sitting on, and sleeping in everything in sight. She was also a little picky. She couldn't have her porridge too hot or her bed too small. She

wanted something that was a good fit for her. Nothing too big or overwhelming, but certainly something rich enough to meet her needs. In short, she was looking for something just right.

We think she would have liked this book.

We hope you do, too.

Getting the Most from an *EZ OOH* Job Description

The table of contents lists all the jobs in this book, arranged into groups of similar jobs. Look through the list and choose one or more of the job groups that sound most interesting to you. Make a list of the jobs that interest you, and then read the descriptions for those jobs.

Each job description in this book uses the same format. They all include six sections:

At a Glance: This section provides a short description of the job, including the most common work activities and responsibilities. Essentially, it gives you a sense of what people in this job *do* for a living.

Career in Focus: Most of the occupations from the *OOH* cover a wide range of jobs within a particular field. This section focus on a more specific job within that career category, a highly related job, or an opportunity for advancement. The description can give you a better idea of what people with specific job titles do.

Where and When: This section describes the working conditions of the job, including the work environment, the number of hours, possible job hazards, and other information that can help you decide whether the job is a good fit.

Did You Know? Because career exploration should be exciting and interesting, this section offers facts, anecdotes, or other unique information designed to give you a better perspective on the job.

For More Information: This section offers associations, agencies, and other organizations you can contact for more information. Internet addresses have been listed whenever possible. For even more information, see Appendix C, “Additional Sources of Career Information.”

Data Bank: The Data Bank contains the facts and figures you need to make an informed decision, from earnings to job openings. The following section describes how to get the most of this information.

Using the Data Bank

Each job description is accompanied by a data bank that includes the most pertinent information every job seeker is looking for. This can help you compare one job with another to find the one with the right earnings, the most potential, and that best matches your interests. Unless otherwise stated, all of the data found in this section is based on information from the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* and the Department of Labor.

Education & Training: This section tells you the education and training levels most employers expect for someone just starting out in the job. Almost all jobs now require a high school diploma, so we do not include “high school graduate” as an option. Instead, we list the *additional* training or education the average high school graduate needs to get the job.

Here are brief explanations of the categories we've used for the levels of training and education:

- ✱ **Work experience:** Work experience in a related job.
- ✱ **Short-term on-the-job training:** On-the-job training that can be as short as a week or last up to six months.
- ✱ **Moderate-term on-the-job training:** On-the-job training that can last from six months to a year.
- ✱ **Long-term on-the-job training:** On-the-job training that lasts up to two or more years. This training can take the form of apprenticeships, especially in the construction trades and production, installation, maintenance, and repair occupations.
- ✱ **Vocational/technical training:** Formal vocational or technical training received in a school, apprenticeship, or cooperative education program or in the military. This training can last from a few months to two or more years and may combine classroom training with on-the-job experience.
- ✱ **Associate degree:** A two-year college degree, usually from a trade school, technical school, or community college.
- ✱ **Bachelor's degree:** A four-year college degree.
- ✱ **Master's degree:** A bachelor's degree plus one or two years of additional education.
- ✱ **Doctoral degree:** A master's degree plus two or more years of additional education.
- ✱ **Professional degree:** Typically, a bachelor's degree plus two or more years of specialized education (for example, education to be an attorney, physician, or veterinarian).
- ✱ **Plus Related Work Experience:** Some jobs require work experience in a related job *as well as* formal education.

Some descriptions in this section present a range of possible requirements (for example, **vocational/technical training to bachelor's degree**). This means that certain positions within that career or certain industries within that field may require more training than others. Keep in mind that this represents the *minimum* requirements to get the job, and that many employers would prefer individuals with even more education and training. In addition, some occupations may require certification or licensing for entry, advancement, or private practice. Certification and licensing usually require completing coursework or passing examinations.

To research jobs by the education and training level, start your exploration with Appendix B, "Job Titles by Education and Training Requirements."

Starting Salaries: These are projected earnings for people just starting out in the job. They are based on a weighted average of what the lowest 10 percent of earners make in that occupation.

Average Earnings: These figures are based on the earnings of the middle 50 percent of workers in that field. In all cases, earnings are presented as annual income, even if the job usually pays by the hour. This allows you to easily compare one job's potential earnings with another's. In cases where there is a wide salary range based on industry or job title, more than one figure may be given. Cases where the average earnings only apply to particular jobs are noted as well.

Keep in mind, the range of earnings given here excludes both the bottom and top 25 percent of earners. That is, people in these jobs may still make substantially *less* and substantially *more* than the figures listed here. We can all think of actors and top executives who make more than \$100,000 dollars a year. Likewise, some waiters and waitresses earn more than \$50,000 a year, although the average earnings for these jobs are much lower.

It is generally true, however, that those jobs requiring higher levels of training and education pay more. Earnings also vary widely for similar jobs with different employers or in different parts of the country. Finally, young workers usually earn less than the average because they have less work experience than older workers in the same job.

Total Jobs Held: This provides an estimate of the total number of people currently employed in this job. This is useful when considering potential job openings. The more people in a given career, generally the more openings that will be available from turnover and retirement.

Job Outlook: This tells you whether the job is likely to employ more or fewer people in the future. The possible categories are as follows:

- ✱ **Declining:** Employment is expected to decrease.
- ✱ **Little change:** Employment is expected to remain about the same or increase as much as 8%.
- ✱ **Average increase:** Employment is expected to increase from 8% to 18%.
- ✱ **Above-average increase:** Employment is expected to increase from 18% to 27%.
- ✱ **Rapid increase:** Employment is expected to increase by 27% or more.

Annual Job Openings: This figure represents both the number of new jobs that will be created as well as the number of already established positions that will become available each year. It's important to note that even jobs expecting a decline in job growth may still have thousands of openings each year due to turnover and retirement.

Related Jobs: This section lists similar jobs you can consider, all referenced elsewhere in this book.

Personality Type: This section describes the personality type whose interests best match the work and environment required of each job. Personality types are derived from the work of vocational psychologist John Holland. The information here is based on O*NET jobs that are linked to each *OOH* job title. The O*NET, or Occupational Information Network, is a database of job information developed and continuously updated by the U.S. Department of Labor. Jobs may fit more than one personality type.

We recommend you look over the following types and find the two or three that you think best describe your personality and interests. As you research the job descriptions, pay attention to the personality types listed in the Data Bank. While a personality type that differs from your own shouldn't keep you from considering a job, one that matches your personality and interests might be an even more appealing career choice. In short, if you are an artistic person and the job says it is a good fit for artistic people, you may be on to something.

Descriptions of the Six Personality Types

Realistic: These occupations frequently involve practical, hands-on problems and solutions. Workers often deal with plants, animals, and real-world materials like wood, tools, and machinery. Many of the occupations require working outside and do not involve a lot of paperwork or working closely with other people.

Investigative: These occupations frequently involve working with ideas and require lots of critical thinking and analysis. These occupations can involve searching for facts and solving complex problems.

Artistic: These occupations frequently involve working with forms, designs, and patterns. They often require self-expression, and the work can be done without following a clear set of rules.

Social: These occupations frequently involve working with, communicating with, and teaching people. They almost always involve helping or providing service to others.

Enterprising: These occupations frequently involve starting up and carrying out projects. They often require leading people, taking risks, and making important decisions. They often deal with business.

Conventional: These occupations frequently involve following set procedures and routines. They often entail working with data and details more than with ideas. Usually there is a clear line of authority to follow.

To research jobs by personality type, start your exploration with Appendix A, “Job Titles by Personality Type” found in the back of the book.

Dare to Compare

Make photocopies of the worksheet on the following page and use it to compare the jobs that interest you most. Simply fill in the information about each job, giving each characteristic (earnings, working conditions, education requirements, and so on) a rating from 1 (undesirable) to 5 (most desirable). Adding the ratings and comparing the totals for each can give you some idea of which jobs you’d like to pursue further.