

Launching Futures: Career Readiness Checklist for Educators



Preparing students for life after high school means equipping them with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in the workforce.

Early exposure to career readiness helps students connect learning to future goals, remain engaged in school, and build essential skills like communication and problem solving. Research shows that starting these activities early improves academic performance, boosts confidence, and prepares students for future success.

This checklist is designed to support educators in building meaningful career readiness activities that align with real-world expectations. Use it as a guide when developing your high school career readiness plan to help students confidently take their next steps.

Career Readiness Activities	Grade Level			
	9	10	11	12
Activities for All Grade Levels (Ongoing or Annual)				
Host an annual career day with local professionals and alumni.				
Create and maintain a career exploration corner in classrooms or libraries with brochures, magazines, and online access.				
Invite guest speakers from various industries for monthly or quarterly talks.				
Offer mock interviews with community volunteers or business partners.				
Create a digital portfolio or career journal assignment.				
Teach resume building and job application writing sessions.				
Facilitate student-led conferences where students present future plans.				
ACT® WorkKeys®-Specific Activities for All Grade Levels (Ongoing or Annual)				
Communicate with staff, students, and parents about getting career ready with the WorkKeys Communication Toolkit.				
Integrate essential skills development — integrity, work ethic, collaboration, resilience, leadership, and creativity — into lessons.				

Career Readiness Activities	Grade Level			
	9	10	11	12
Build foundational career-relevant skills with the ACT® WorkKeys® Curriculum into your lessons.				
Embed financial literacy lessons into core subjects or offer standalone workshops.				
Facilitate career exploration activities with the WorkKeys Skills-Based Career Navigation Toolkit.				
Administer the WorkKeys Essential Skills Assessment.				
Prepare students for WorkKeys Assessments with official sample questions and practice tests.				
Administer WorkKeys Assessments.				
Help students interpret and match their WorkKeys scores with the 'Matching Your WorkKeys Skills to Jobs' coaching tool.				
Recognize achievements with the ACT® WorkKeys® National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC®) Recognition Toolkit.				
Encourage WorkKeys NCRC earners to share their Credly digital badge with employers on resumes and social media.				
Support WorkKeys NCRC earners in leveraging their credential through Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) to earn college credit.				
Partnerships & Schoolwide Support				
Establish partnerships with local businesses, community colleges, and trade organizations.				
Connect with workforce development boards and local chambers of commerce to build an ACT® Work Ready Community.				
Apply for grants or funding to support career readiness programming.				
Align your curriculum with state career readiness standards and update it accordingly.				
Grade 9 (Freshman Year)				
Administer a career interest inventory or leverage PreACT® Individual Score Reports for career interests.				
Introduce students to career clusters/pathways and postsecondary options.				
Have students create a four-year academic and career plan.				
Lead a goal-setting workshop focused on academic and professional development.				
Host a panel of upperclassmen to share how they're preparing for their futures.				

Career Readiness Activities	Grade Level			
	9	10	11	12
Grade 10 (Sophomore Year)				
Guide students through personality and work-style assessments.				
Coordinate industry tours or virtual workplace visits.				
Organize a career scavenger hunt using online research tools.				
Grade 11 (Junior Year)				
Help students update resumes and begin building cover letters.				
Pair students with mentors from the community or alumni network.				
Coordinate job shadowing experiences.				
Conduct career-focused writing assignments, such as personal statements or scholarship essays.				
Teach a mini-unit on labor market trends and in-demand jobs.				
Grade 12 (Senior Year)				
Guide students through college, trade school, job, or military applications.				
Offer a series of “Adulting 101” workshops (budgeting, taxes, apartment hunting, etc.).				
Provide FAFSA completion support and financial aid guidance.				
Facilitate internships, apprenticeships, or capstone projects.				
Celebrate student career decisions with a signing day or showcase event.				
Encourage “My Path After Graduation” reflective essays or presentations.				