

# Planning

## Exploring Support Networks and Labour Market Information

**OPEN SCHOOL BC**

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[Exploring Support Networks and Labour Market Information]

*Why Normal Workers Are in the Minority*: portions from "Case Study: Why Normal Workers Are in the Minority" by Bruce Little (Horizons 2000+ Career Studies)

## Course History

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**Project Management:** Michelle Nicholson, Eleanor Liddy, Shannon Mitchell

**Instructional Designer:** Carol Orom

**Writers:** Karen Barnstable, Tom Bercic, Leanne Baugh-Peterson, Heather Green, Heidi Hackman, Eleanor Liddy, Carol Orom, Wendy Rush, Michelle Nicholson

**Reviewers:** BC Securities Commission, Cindy John, Wendy Rush SD 63 Saanich, Janey Smith, Jane Thomas UBC, Joan Wheeler South Central Distance Education School, Shelley Wilcox SD 36 Surrey, Workers' Compensation Board of British Columbia

**Editor:** Lee McKenzie McAnally

**Copyright:** Ilona Ugro

**Researcher:** André Ruhigisha

**Production Technicians:** Sharon Barker, Beverly Carstensen, Laurie Lozoway

**Graphics:** Pat McCallum, Cal Jones, Janet Bartz

**Multimedia:** Chris Manuel, Robert Aitken, Charles Sherman, Sean Cunniam, Leah Renahan, Dal Little

**Video Production:** Pandora's Box Productions, Victoria

**Student Actors/Contributors:** Heather Bertsch, Jacki Bickford, Jenny Birnbaum, Ian Dunbar, Kevin Dunbar, Drew Futcher, Scott Gilmore, Seth Gustavson, Kevin House, Kimberly House, Yuka Kurokawa, Steve Larabie, Shane Lynch, Jennifer Matte, Nicholas Matte, Kiran Nandhra, Aimee Nicholson, Travis Robinson, Desireé Stevens, Jeremy Walden, Matt Steele

**Teacher Advisors:** Heather Green North Island Distance Education School, Karen Smith SD 40 New Westminster, Kathleen MacDonald SD 40 New Westminster, Ethel Mailhot South Island Distance Education School, Greg Smith SD 53 Oliver, Tom Bercic Greater Vancouver Distance Education School, Dieter Bauer The Open Door Vernon BC, Val Kilbey Central Interior Distance Education School, Maryjanne Yusp Consortium of Distance Education Schools of British Columbia, Maureen Shenton South Island Distance Education School, Anne Mais SD 63 Saanich

**Special Thanks to:** Dini Steyn, Rachael Livingston, Debbie Pires SD 63 Saanich, Students of Parkland Secondary Sidney BC, Matt Steele, BC Ministry of Education: Leslie Thompson, Kristin Mimick and Mary-Anne Neal

# Table of Contents

Viewing Your PDF Learning Package . . . . .	iv
Overview: Section Organization . . . . .	v
<b>Exploring Support Networks and Labour Market Information . . .</b>	<b>1</b>
Lesson A: Support Networks . . . . .	3
Lesson B: Building Networks . . . . .	9
Lesson C: Exploring Forms of Employment . . . . .	14
Lesson D: Work of the Future. . . . .	20
Solutions . . . . .	25
Glossary . . . . .	29
Appendix: Researching Skills . . . . .	31

## Viewing Your PDF Learning Package

This Pdf Learning Package is designed to be viewed in Acrobat. If you are using the optional media resources, you should be able to link directly to the resource from the pdf viewed in Acrobat Reader. The links may not work as expected with other pdf viewers.



Download Adobe Acrobat Reader: <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>

# Overview

## Section Organization

### Lessons

Lessons have a combination of reading and activities to give you a chance to process the material while being an active learner. Each lesson is made up of the following parts:

### Activities

Throughout some lessons you see self-checking activities.

If your learning package contains self-check activities, you will mark these activities using the solutions at the end of the section.

You will need to do research to complete the activities. If you would like to review how to research, view the lesson on this Foundational Skill in the *Appendix* at the end of this Learning Package.

### Lesson Summary

This is a brief summary of the lesson content as well as some instructions on what to do next.

At the end of this section you will find:

### Solutions

This contains all of the solutions to the Activities.

### Icons

Throughout the section you will see a few icons used on the left-hand side of the page. These icons are used to signal a change in activity or to bring your attention to important instructions.



Planning online resource (optional)

This indicates a resource available on the internet. If you do not have access, you may skip these sections.



**Solutions**

## SECTION ORGANIZATION

# Exploring Support Networks and Labour Market Information

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Are you interested in opening the door of work for yourself right now? In this section you'll learn how to get that first job by exploring the ins and outs of an employment search. You'll find out what's hot in the labour market and what's not and start to build your networks for finding a job.

Networking is the skill of communicating with people that you know in order to share information, advice or resources. In this section you will be introduced to the concept of networking and how to make networking a viable and productive job search technique work for you.

This will include:

- Support networks in schools and communities.
- Personal friends and family members who can provide support for students.
- Building Networks through volunteering, new activities, job shadowing, etc.
- Using networks to find job/career opportunities.

You will need to do research to complete the activities. If you would like to review how to research, view the lesson on this Foundational Skill in the *Appendix*.

In this section you will:

- Identify effective job-searching strategies.
- Identify your own network.



## Lesson A

# Support Networks

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### Overview

It has been said that getting a job is more “who you know than what you know.” If this is true, then how do you get to know the right people? The usual way is through what is sometimes called **networking**.

In this lesson you will find out more about networking and why it is an effective strategy for developing **job leads** and for finding a job.

### The Importance of Networks

How does networking help in a job search?

Networking is about building relationships, and the strongest networks are built on friendships. This is why developing relationships at work can be beneficial in creating specific work networks. Here are some ways networking helps:

- It is an effective way to share information and get advice about employment.
- It involves you in your community and then people will get to know you and your strengths and talents.
- You may learn inside information about positions that are available and what companies are looking for.
- You may get a recommendation that leads straight to a job.

Can you think of others?

## Activity 1 How Do People Get Jobs

How do most people look for a job? Is networking successful? What are the best ways to network?

Use these activities to explore the ins and outs of job seeking.



If you have access, view the *Job Searching Strategies* media online (<http://media.openschool.bc.ca/osbcmmedia/pl10/pl103/pl1031a2a001.html>).

- Here is a list of the 9 most commonly used job search methods. Place the letter from the statement in the *Method* column that you think matches the statement in the *Popularity* column. You will have sorted them from the most common (1) to the least (9).

Popularity	Method
1. 66.0% _____	a. Private employment agency
2. 50.8% _____	b. Asked friends about jobs elsewhere
3. 45.9% _____	c. Asked friends about jobs where they work
4. 41.8% _____	d. School placement office
5. 28.4% _____	e. Asked relatives about jobs elsewhere
6. 27.3% _____	f. Applied directly to employer
7. 21.0% _____	g. Asked teacher or professor
8. 12.5% _____	h. Answered local newspaper ads
9. 10.4% _____	i. Asked relatives about jobs where they work



Turn to Solutions at the end of the Section and mark your work.

2. If you have already checked Solutions, you will now know their popularity. Try to rank these job searching methods again, this time according to how successful they are. Place the letter from the statement in the *Method* column that you think matches the statement in the *Success* column. You will have sorted them from the most successful (1) to the least (9).

Success	Method
1. 47.7% _____	a. Applied directly to employer
2. 24.2% _____	b. Answered local newspaper ads
3. 23.9% _____	c. School placement office
4. 22.1% _____	d. Asked friends about jobs elsewhere
5. 21.4% _____	e. Asked relatives about jobs elsewhere
6. 19.3% _____	f. Private employment agency
7. 12.1% _____	g. Asked relatives about jobs where they work
8. 11.9% _____	h. Asked teacher or professor
9. 7.4% _____	i. Asked friends about jobs where they work



Turn to Solutions at the end of the Section and mark your work

3. Now jot down your answers to these questions.

a. Does "applied directly to employer" deserve that rank that it has?

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b. What ranking surprised you the most? Why?

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## Activity 2

# Successful Networks

The network of people you know can include four types of connections:

1. **Personal Connections:** people you know, who know you well, like friends and family.
2. **Professional Connections:** people who know you through work or school, like a teacher or supervisor.
3. **Organizational Connections:** people who know you through clubs, sports, or faith communities.
4. **Chance Connections:** people you meet outside of the other connections, like someone you talk to sitting next to you in a waiting room or a store clerk.

Completing this activity will help you to get a picture of your personal network.

1. Create your own chart. Use the following example.
2. Fill in your chart with the following information for each connection:
  - a description of that connection
  - a general example
  - a personal example

My Personal Network			
Connection	Description	General Example	Personal Examples
Technological	People you communicate with on the Internet	Chat room or discussion group	Lim from Planning online
Personal			
Professional			
Organizational			
Chance			

Now that you have explored the idea of personal networks, stop and think about what you have learned. Answer these questions with full explanations.

1. Why do you think most people get jobs by networking and contacting employers directly?

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2. “It’s not what you know but who you know.” Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why?

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## Lesson B

# Building Networks

### Overview

Now that you know why networking is such an effective job-search tool, you need to learn how to create your own network. This lesson will help you to identify who can help with your job search or offer educational and career advice and support.

### Networking Basics

Off the top of your head, how many people can you think of who could help with job leads?

Start with your family. Do any of your family members work in an industry that interests you or would have potential opportunities for you? What about your friends? Could they help you? These people might be the start of your personal **network**.

Here are a few key elements about networking to think about:

- Networks are based on the needs of the parties involved—be sure to provide assistance to the individuals in your network when you can.
- When people work together, they often form relationships and bonds. These bonds help to create trust and a willingness to share information and support.
- Remember that your personal integrity and your behaviour in social situations is reflected in what people think of you.
- Share information and intentions so the people in your network are kept up to date.
- Keep in touch with the people on your network, even if you don't immediately require their help.
- Remember to thank people who help you. Send a note, give a telephone call, or send an email.

## Activity 1

# Who is in My Personal Network?

We often underestimate the number of resources available to us. By not making friends and family aware of our intentions to pursue a job, we may miss out on opportunities simply because people weren't aware of our plans. Let's say you know someone who plans to quit a job that interests you. If you apply for the position just as the person gives notice, the employer might offer the position to you.

Networking is about sharing information and advice with other people. Completing this exercise will help you to become aware of your network possibilities.



If you have access, view the *Making Decisions* media online (<http://media.openschool.bc.ca/osbcmmedia/pl10/pl106/pl1061---h001.html>).

1. Create your own web map of possibilities. Start with yourself in the center and use a web format to organize your family, friends, and community contacts into these categories:
  - personal
  - professional
  - organizational
  - chance
  - technological

You may want to go back to the activity in Lesson A to help you start your web map.

2. Answer these questions:
  - a. Which areas are the smallest?

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- b. Describe a specific plan that will enable you to expand your smallest area by three or more people. After you have your plan, check it by asking these two questions: How can I put this plan into action? When will I start putting this plan into action?

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**Note:** There are no self-check solutions for this activity. You will use your responses as starting material for your Section Assignment.

## Activity 2 Reflection

Answer these questions.

1. Why should you try to include all five types of connections in your network?

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2. Who are the important people in your network now? Why or how are they key to your work goals?

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3. Who will or might become important members of your network in a few years? Why?

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4. How many of the following networking traits apply to you? The more you can practice these, the better networker you'll become.

- I keep up with my friends.
- I like to help others.
- I celebrate successes with others.
- I listen to others in conversation.
- I share my thoughts, ideas and plans with people.
- I try to meet new people.
- I pass on information that I think would interest others in my network.
- I ask for advice.

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Turn to the solutions at the end of the section and mark your work.

## Summary

Completing this lesson has helped you to:

- Identify people in your life who can help with your job search.

## Lesson C

# Exploring Forms of Employment

### Overview

The next lessons will introduce you to the different forms that employment can take and enable you to seek out information about the labour market (wage, working conditions, education, and employment prospects) that relates to the careers that you may have interest in pursuing.

Read the headlines:

*"Today's High School Graduate to Have 7 Careers"*

*"Being Flexible: The Key to a Successful Career"*

*"New Workers Must be Highly Skilled"*

*"Steel Company Forces Early Retirements"*

*"Union Fights Outsourcing"*

The world of work is changing. Everyone is talking about how this personally affects them. What kinds of things are you hearing?

You need to keep these changes in mind when you think about getting a job, or the type of future career or careers in which you'd like to work.

In this lesson, you will explore the world of work, including different types of employment. This will help you consider types of work that might interest you.

### Why Normal Workers Are in the Minority

Just as the job market is ever changing, so are the ways of working. The traditional 9–5 p.m. work week is becoming increasingly rare and only exists in small employment sectors. This is happening for many reasons—personal choice, technology, availability, and the cost of how work is done. Where and when people work is becoming more flexible. This impacts both the employee and employer.

Think about this... you may listen to a morning radio show that starts before dawn and covers the early traffic reports. You take a bus home from meeting a friend in the evening. You have dinner in a restaurant, or fill up your car with gas at night or on the weekend. In summer, you pass by a field where workers are picking strawberries at the break of dawn. You visit a rec centre for a morning workout on

Sunday. Your child wakes with trouble breathing and you whisk him off to the hospital at 2 a.m. In all those scenarios, there are people working outside what we think of as the “traditional” hours. The reality is that two thirds of Canadians have jobs that involve working in the hours outside of 9 to 5 Monday to Friday.

Some stats about the types of employment in BC:

- 84 percent have paid jobs, what we consider “normal,” versus 16 percent who are self-employed.
- Self-employed workers run their own businesses, freelance, or offer consulting. They set their own hours, and work as much as their business requires.
- 74 percent of people with paid jobs are permanent, which we might consider normal. But 10 percent have temporary jobs to fill a short-lived demand that will end at a specified time.
- 12 percent of those with permanent paid jobs work part-time. Some choose part-time work to make time for looking after children, complete school work, or while they work to get a business or other endeavour off the ground. Others work part-time because they aren’t able to get full-time hours.
- Out of the 62 percent of people with permanent, full-time paid jobs, 6% work from their homes. This includes telecommuters, who keep in touch with the office by phone and email, and other workers such as sewers who do piece-work for a clothing manufacturer.
- 5 percent of the permanent, full-time workers who leave their homes and go to work each day will actually work longer hours than full-time (more than 48 hours per week). These include managers, teachers, and some in the construction industry.
- 37 percent of workers have just one, permanent, full-time job at their employer’s location and actually work Monday to Friday. Some of these may work on a flexible schedule—they may work from 7 to 3 instead of 9 to 5, or they may work a little longer every day in order to take a day off every second or third week. Some choose to work a compressed work week, working more hours over fewer days. Some may split the hours, salary and benefits of a full-time job with another employee, known as job sharing. The other 13 percent of traditional workers actually work other days.
- And not all of the permanent, full-time traditional employees work daytime hours. That is reserved for just 33 percent. The rest work shifts, or periods of time outside “normal” daytime hours.

## Activity 1 Job Lingo

Being aware of the trends in the workplace and the different forms of employment can help you decide the type and format of employment you would like to pursue in the future.



If you have access to the internet, you can complete the *Job Lingo* practice quiz online. (<http://media.openschool.bc.ca/osbcmmedia/pl10/pl103/pl1032a1a001.html>).

1. Match the list of words to their proper definition.

- |          |  |                         |
|----------|--|-------------------------|
| 1. ____  | Working at home—linked to the workplace by computers and phone                             | a. Compressed Work Week |
| 2. ____  | Workers start and end their days on flexible schedules                                     | b. Flextime             |
| 3. ____  | When a group of people share the available work  | c. Job-sharing          |
| 4. ____  | Two or more people sharing the responsibilities, salary, and benefits of one full-time job | d. Part-time            |
| 5. ____  | Working fewer hours but with the same benefits as a full-time employee                     | e. Leave-time           |
| 6. ____  | Working longer days but a shorter week   | f. Permanent part-time  |
| 7. ____  | Gradually retiring by slowly working fewer hours   | g. Piecework            |
| 8. ____  | An approved absence from work for personal reasons without losing your job                 | h. Self-employed        |
| 9. ____  | Someone who starts and ends a job on specific dates  | i. Shift work           |
| 10. ____ | Working for oneself  | j. Telecommuting        |
| 11. ____ | Working less than a full-time schedule   | k. Temporary worker     |
| 12. ____ | Working different hours at different times   | l. Work-sharing         |
| 13. ____ | An agreement to complete a specific task (e.g., sewing)                                    | m. Phased retirement    |

2. List four forms of work that interest you in the space below. After each form of work, list at least two jobs that might fit those categories. Then think of people you know who do the jobs you have listed. For each job, note what you think would be the required skills and education and an estimated income range (self-employed, etc. won't have 'salary.' Identify two or three pros and cons of their situations.

1. Form of Work:

\_\_\_\_\_

Job 1: \_\_\_\_\_ Job 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Required Skills:

Required Skills:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Estimated income range:

Estimated income range:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Form of Work:

\_\_\_\_\_

Job 1: \_\_\_\_\_ Job 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Required Skills:

Required Skills:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Estimated income range:

Estimated income range:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Form of Work:

\_\_\_\_\_

Job 1: \_\_\_\_\_ Job 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Required Skills:

Required Skills:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Estimated income range:

Estimated income range:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Form of Work:

\_\_\_\_\_

Job 1: \_\_\_\_\_ Job 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Required Skills:

Required Skills:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Estimated income range:

Estimated income range:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Turn to Solutions at the end of the Section and mark your work.

## Summary

Understanding how the job market is changing can help you create or find the type of work you want, and make you aware of new opportunities.

**Completing this lesson has helped you to:**

- Recognize different forms of employment.
- Define each form of employment.
- Reflect on your own personal situation.

## Lesson D

# Work of the Future

### Overview

What jobs will disappear in six years? What jobs will be hot in six years? In this lesson you will consider how knowledge of the change in society can open up opportunities for you and help you plan for your future. Ask an older family member or friend this question: How has work changed in the past 30 years? You may be surprised at the answers you get.

### In the Future

Change is constant. A person must be able to cope with change and initiate change when necessary. How? By paying attention to trend watchers—the people who watch the **trends** and general direction society is taking. Careers and businesses can flourish if they are in the predicted areas of demand. Knowing these trends can help people make decisions about today and therefore plan for the future.

Before you plan a future with a particular job in mind, you will want to know if that job will still exist in ten years. Certain trend conditions present today will definitely affect the jobs of tomorrow. One example is the aging population. Baby Boomers—people born between the late 1940s to the early 1960s—currently make up the largest segment of our population. That population is retiring or getting ready to retire, and due to their age, will require specialized medical and personal care.

### Activity 1

## Into the Future

Change is constant. A person must be able to cope with change, and even initiate change when necessary. How can you make change work for you? One way is by learning about current and future trends. You can do this by paying attention to trend-watchers or people who watch trends and attempt to make predictions.

Changes in technology have always shaped what kind of work is required. When movable type and the printing press came on the scene in the middle ages, scribe work was no longer so necessary. When cars became common, no one needed stage coach drivers. Now, it's computer technology—and the skills required to work in the information age change as rapidly as this technology evolves.

1. One trend that is often talked about today is the aging population and how that condition will affect jobs. What trends do you think will impact your future? List four of these.

i. \_\_\_\_\_

ii. \_\_\_\_\_

iii. \_\_\_\_\_

iv. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Job Trends change all the time. It's best to research trends for the region you are looking for work at the time you are looking for work, or deciding what kind of education or training to pursue. There are good online resources in BC that are kept up-to-date with current statistics on the labour market in all regions of the province. Here are two key resources:

*Work BC*

*A Guide to the BC Economy and Labour Market*



If you have access to the Internet, check out one of these resources and search for trends that are current now. How many of your predictions are reflected in what you found there?

*Work BC* (<http://www.workbc.ca>)

*A Guide to the BC Economy and Labour Market*  
(<http://guidetobceconomy.org/>)

Making predictions about future trends requires an analytical look at facts about our labour market now, and what that might mean for the years ahead. So we can look at the fact that the largest demographic in our population is retired or facing retirement, and make the assumption that more jobs will be available for younger people. Or we might assume that jobs that provide services to an aging population will be in more demand. But the truth is that the labour market changes very quickly, especially given the economic forces at work today. The most certain prediction you can make is that flexibility, and an ability to adapt to change will always be required. How many of your predictions are reflected in the lists?

LESSON D: WORK OF THE FUTURE

3. Using *Work BC, A Guide to the BC Economy*, or another resource, pick out five careers currently predicted as one that will be in demand in the next five years, that you may be interested in. List them here for your own reference.

i. \_\_\_\_\_

ii. \_\_\_\_\_

iii. \_\_\_\_\_

iv. \_\_\_\_\_

v. \_\_\_\_\_

4. Create an At-a-Glance Career Information Chart. Research the appropriate information for each of the five careers you chose in the previous step. If you are using the *Work BC* (<http://www.workbc.ca>) resource, you can search for profiles of the occupations you chose. If you do not have access to the Internet, you will have to find the information in different ways.

At-a-Glance Career Information Chart				
	Occupation	Average Hourly Earnings	Outlook for Future	Average Unemployment
1.	Pharmacists, Dietitians, and Nutritionists	\$26.66	Good	1%

5. Now answer the following questions in complete sentences:

a. Would you consider any of these for a future career? Why or why not?

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- b. Does the information change your outlook on possible careers?  
Why or why not?

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There are no self-check answers for these reflective questions, but completing them will help you target your future career goals, and direct your networking efforts.

## Summary

**Completing this lesson has helped you to:**

- Identify job trends in areas of employment that interest you.



# Solutions

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## Lesson A: Support Networks

### Activity 1

1.
  1. f
  2. c
  3. h
  4. b
  5. i
  6. e
  7. a
  8. d
  9. g
2.
  1. a
  2. f
  3. b
  4. i
  5. c
  6. g
  7. h
  8. d
  9. e
3.
  - a. While applying directly to an employer is definitely the number one way people have success at finding a job, it's not as successful as people expect! If you're looking for work, your strategy should include a variety of searching methods.
  - b. Answers will vary—will you consider trying a method that you didn't think was going to be that successful?

### Activity 2

1. Answers will vary. Compare your chart with the sample that follows.

My Personal Network			
Connection	Description	General Example	Personal Examples
Technological	People you communicate with on the Internet	Chat room or discussion group	Lim from Planning online
Personal	People who know you well enough to describe your personal strengths.	Immediate family, other relatives, family friends, friends	Sue, your mom's best friend
Professional	People who know you through school or work and can describe your employability skills.	Teachers, co-workers, supervisors, coaches, mentors	Ms. Jones, your teacher
Organizational	People who know you through community organizations.	Computer club, hiking club, community choir, faith community	Rev. Smith, your minister
Chance	People you encounter by chance. They may find out your interests from talking to you and be able to give you a job lead, or introduce you to someone who can help.	Store clerk, waiter, person sitting next to you in the dentist's office, a service person at your home	Mary, the receptionist at your dentist's office

2. Answers will vary. Example for question 1: I think most people get jobs by networking and contacting employers directly because you are getting the inside scoop from the source, or someone close to that source.

## Lesson B: Building Networks

### Activity 2

1. Answers will vary. Example: You should try to include all five types of connections in your network because the more wide spread your connections, the more chances you will have to follow up on a job lead.
2. Answers will vary. Example: The Work Experience teacher at school is an important person in my network because he is aware of many jobs in the area where I live.
3. Answers will vary. Example: My current boss may become an important member of my network in a few years because I would like to work for him full time when I finish graduate.

## Lesson C: Forms of Employment

### Activity 1

1.
  1. j
  2. b
  3. l
  4. c
  5. f
  6. a
  7. m
  8. e
  9. k
  10. h
  11. d
  12. i

2. Answers may vary. See the example below.

Example:

3. Form of Work: Self-employment

*Job 1: Real estate agent*

Required Skills: Communication Skills, People Skills, Sales skills, lots of initiative!

*Job 2: Online Business owner (“Webpreneur”)*

Required Skills: Written communications, Online Marketing



# Glossary

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## employment status

the form in which you are employed, such as full-time, part-time, seasonal, under-employed, or unemployed

## full-time

working the number of hours deemed "full-time" by your employer, usually 37.5–40 hours a week. Often includes additional benefits, such as medical and dental coverage.

## job lead

a tip or information about a job opening

## Labour Market

the current status of different types of employment throughout the country or in a specific area. Information can include wages, education required, and future growth prospects.

## network

a group of people who know you personally, professionally, through organizations, through school, or by a chance encounter

## networking

communicating and sharing information or advice with people you know or can get to know

## part-time

working less than the number of hours deemed "full-time" by your employer. May or may not include additional benefits.

## seasonal

working within a "season," such as picking fruit, working on a fish boat, or at ski resort during the winter

## trends

general directions or movements that may be popular now or in the future

## under-employed

earning less money than is needed to live



## Researching Skills

# Conducting a Research Report

If your assignment is about something you experienced, like your first job, you won't need to research anything. But when you are asked to write about a topic that you don't have all the information about, you'll need to conduct research. Conducting a research report is a skill that involves three steps:



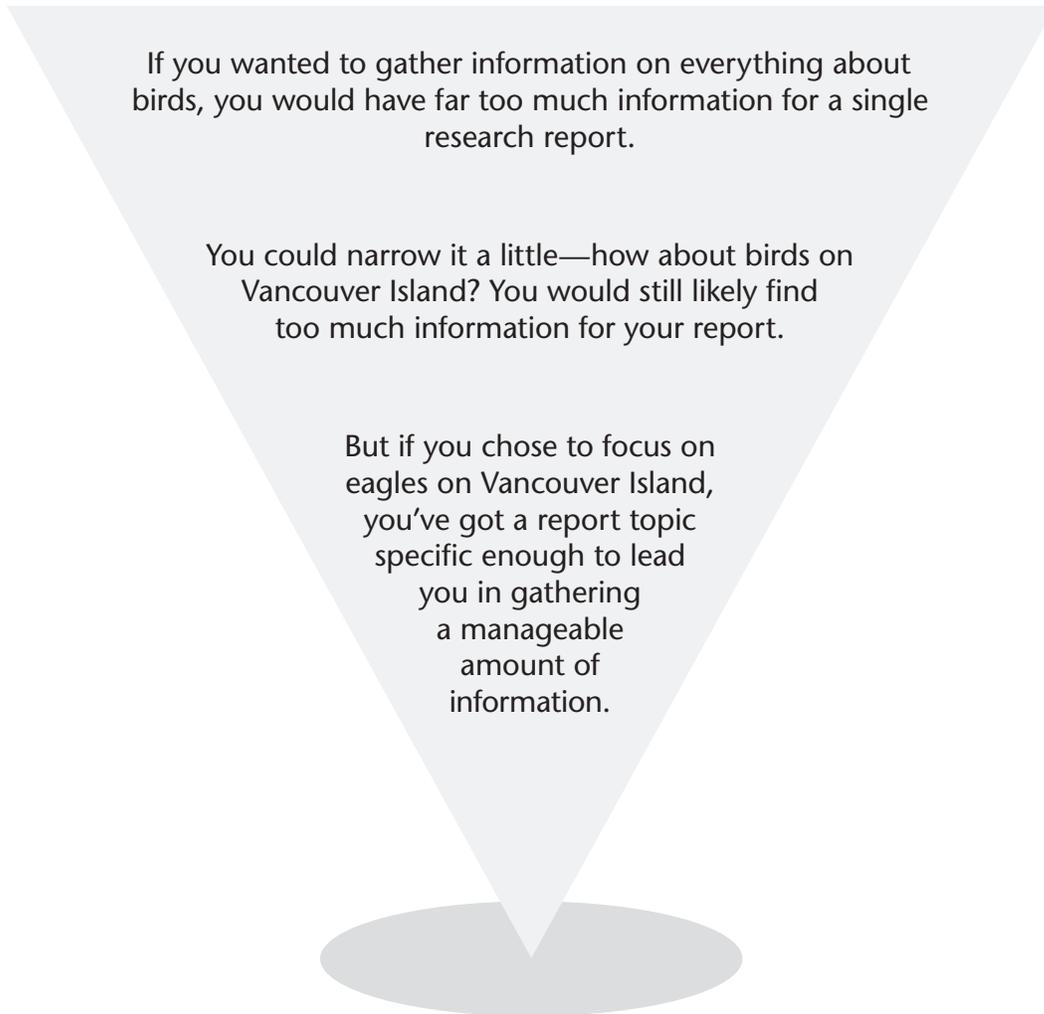
## Finding Information

### Search Strategy

- Find It** 1. Find a Focus
- Gather It** 2. Gather Information
- Use It** 3. Use Information

## 1. Find a Focus

You will want to narrow your topic to something you are specifically interested in.



You can define a research topic by identifying a series of critical or essential questions.

- Which of the topics that I've read about so far have interested me?
- Do I have any personal connection to any of the topics—family, friends, my leisure time activities, and so on that would make the topic more interesting to research?
- Have I studied any of these topics before?
- Do I already know of some resources I can access for any of these topics?

## More Tips for Finding a Focus:

### Find a Focus

#### Getting Clear

- List what you know about the topic and any questions you have.
- Ask your teacher for more information on what's expected.
- Talk about your project with friends and family members.
- Read a couple of articles on your topic. For example, try an encyclopedia or magazine article, or a chapter in a textbook.

#### Brainstorm

Brainstorm as many aspects of your question or ideas as you can. Then look for themes that may have emerged.

#### Idea Map

Use an idea map to help generate ideas and direction.

#### 5 W's

Use the 5 W's to narrow down your question.



Whatever you decide, be sure to clearly identify the scope of your research before you get too far into the research process.

## 2. Gather Information

Before you begin looking for information, ask yourself:

### What do I know?

Ask: What do I know about this topic before I look anything up?

List that information in your notebook. There! You have already begun your research.

### What do I want to know?

Ask: What information do I want to find out about the topic?

List any questions you have about it.

Remember—the more general your questions, the higher the chance that you will be overwhelmed with information when you begin to do research. Make them as specific as possible.

### How am I going to find out?

Break down the process into stages:

- Look at print resources and non-print resources.
- Balance the use of primary and secondary resources (this means first hand and second hand information).
- Take detailed notes from resources.
- Collect bibliographic information from sources.
- Critically analyze sources for quality of material. (Use your critical reading skills)
- Organize and condense notes into a manageable form.

## Tips for Gathering Information:

### Gather Information

#### The Internet

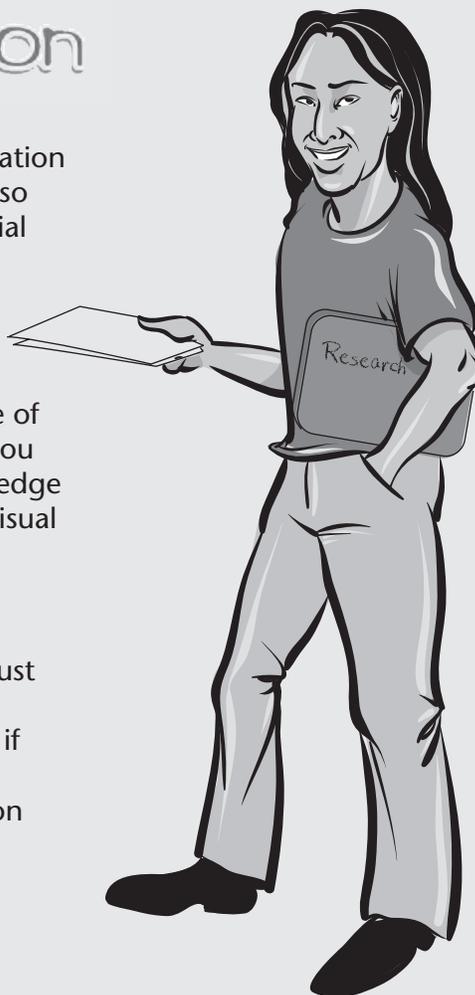
The Internet is a massive collection of information that can be valuable to you, but because it's so large and uncontrolled you need to use special strategies to use it effectively.

#### Other Sources

Because the Internet is easy to access, you may be tempted to use it as your only source of information on your topic. But in doing so, you could be overlooking some important knowledge that is only available in print or on an audiovisual resource.

#### Evaluating Information

Not all information is created equally. You must be careful not to think that "just because it's published it must be true." How can you tell if information is reliable? There are some easy questions you can ask yourself. See the section on building critical reading skills here in your *Foundational Skills Package*.



Below is a list of places to find information, and the kinds of information you can look for in conducting your research.

### Where and What to Find

#### Kinds of Information

- books
- articles
- research reports
- government information
- statistics
- maps
- pictures, photos, images
- audio material
- video material
- expert opinion

#### Location of Information

- personal collections
- school library
- public library
- college or university library
- provided by teacher
- internet
- television
- other

#### Types of Resources

- books
- magazines
- newspapers
- encyclopedias
- dictionaries
- biographical dictionaries
- directories
- handbooks and manuals
- almanacs
- atlases and gazetteers
- audio/visual, including
  - » cassettes, CDs, videos, DVDs, slides
- microfilm and microfiche
- computer resources,
  - » including software, CD-ROMs, the internet
- interviews

### Some more resources:

#### Libraries:

Your local public library, or school library is a great place to start. They will have some or all of the following:

- useful books you can borrow for free
- databases of articles
- encyclopedias and other reference material on CD or online

Try looking up their collections online, or phone the librarian if you'd like to find out more about possible resources before going to the library yourself. Don't forget your textbook! It may also be a good source of information.

## Interviews:

Talking to other people can offer you ideas and perspectives that you may not have considered. Ask people what they think about your topic, and if they say something that you might use in your composition, note their words, the date, and place of the interview. Be sure you've spelled the person's name correctly.

If you know people who have lived the experience of one of the issues, you might want to conduct an interview.

### Here's How:

- Ask them if they could speak to you about their experiences.
- Ask a few questions to direct the interview.
- Show the person your composition topic, and listen.
- Jot down notes or use a recorder to help keep a record of their comments.
- Finally, thank the person for sharing his or her story.
- Offer a copy of the composition when it is complete.

Don't forget to cite the interview in your list of resources for the composition.

## Online/Internet Searching:

If you have access to the Internet, it can be a useful tool for research. Check out the next researching skills, "Searching the Internet Effectively," for tips on the source of information.

### 3. Use of Information

#### Use Information

##### Making Notes

You probably have some favourite ways for making notes on information such as writing or diagramming on notepaper, a word processor, or recipe cards, or recording using a tape recorder, video camera, or digital camera. Check out the prewriting section of the *Foundational Skills Package*.

##### Tracking Sources

There's nothing worse than having a great piece of information and forgetting where you found it. This will mean you can't use it because you're not able to cite its source. You'll need a system for tracking where you found your information right from the beginning. The best approach is to create a proper citation right away. Do this by hand, in an electronic file.

##### Plagiarism

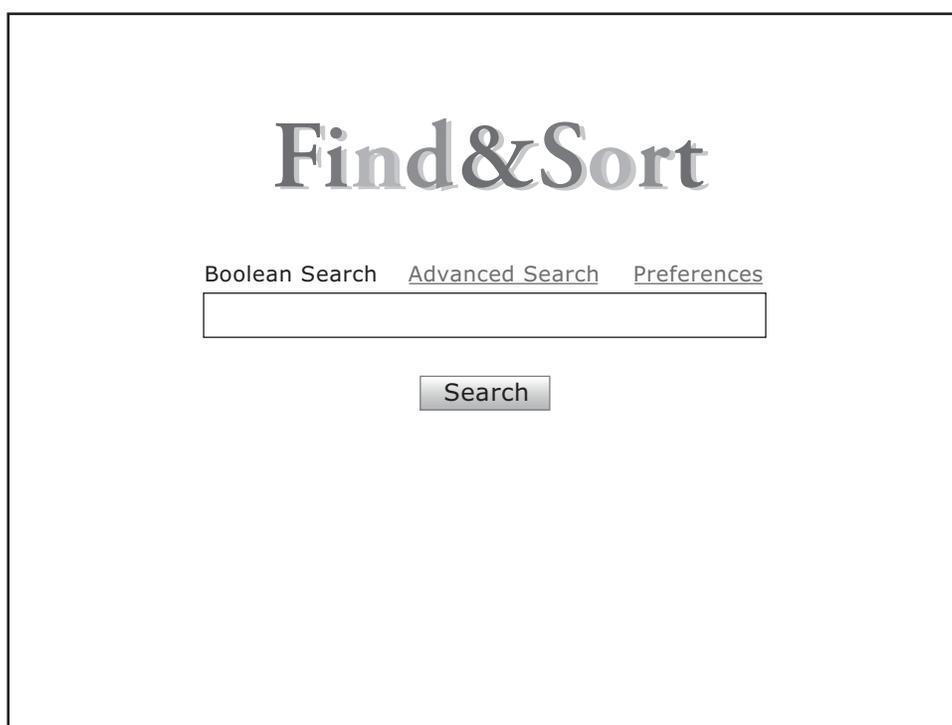
Plagiarism is the copying of original words, images, or ideas of others and using them as your own. It is an offence because people legally own their work. One of the most common—and often unintentional—ways to plagiarize is to cut and paste information into your project and not present it with a citation. It's easy for teachers to catch plagiarism, so don't do it! Instead, put ideas that are useful to you into your own words and cite the source. Or, if there is a particularly useful bit of information, quote it exactly and cite it. This way, you're a winner and so is the original author.

## Researching Skills

# Searching the Internet Effectively

The following skill is useful not only for searching the Web with a search engine, but also for searching databases or other digital reference material available at your local library, such as Encarta.

### Finding and Sorting Information Online



The image shows a screenshot of a search engine interface titled "Find&Sort". The title is in a large, serif font. Below the title, there are three links: "Boolean Search", "Advanced Search", and "Preferences". Underneath these links is a search input field, and below that is a "Search" button.

Think of finding and sorting information as a mini-research project! You have a question in your mind to which you are seeking an answer. You need to formulate a strategy to find your answer. Say, for example, you want to find out when a movie will be playing this weekend. You realize that you have lost your newspaper schedule, but you are sure there must be a schedule online somewhere. Thank goodness for the Internet! You log on and go to your favourite search engine to find the movie schedule. Too easy!

You enter the search term, “Movie Listings.” That’ll do it, right?!

The screenshot shows a search engine interface with the following elements:

- Search engine logo: **Find&Sort**
- Navigation links: [Boolean Search](#), [Advanced Search](#), [Preferences](#)
- Search input field:
- Search button: **Search**
- Results summary: **Web** results 1-10 of about 50,250,000
- Search results:
  - Moviephone: Homepage - Movies, showtimes, **movie****  
...  
Find movies, **movie** times, showtimes, theaters, **listings**, ratings, **movie** phone, **movie** pages, dvds, videos, trailers and more...  
[movies.com/](#) - 50k
  - Movie Link — Download movies oline**  
Get the newest **movie** downloads. Check out the new **movie** titles and download a free **movie**.  
[www.movieink.com/](#) - 26k
  - Buy **Movie** tickets online**  
Buy **movie** tickets in advance. No more sold out! ... Find showtimes, for any **movie** in any theater in the US. Search by theater, ...  
[www.buytickets.com](#) - 45k

Not quite . . . Over 50 200 000 results have come up! Now what?

Try “Movies in BC” and you get fewer results until, finally, you type in “Movie Listings” + “Name of your community” + “BC” and there it is—what you need—at the top of a very short list.

This screenshot is identical to the one above, showing the same search engine interface and results for the search term 'movie listings'.

You have just completed a Boolean search!

A **Boolean search** = a way to combine multiple terms when searching the Internet. You form it like this:

TERM + TERM (where the terms are the key words you want to search)

Example: eagles + “vancouver island”

Remember you can include more than two:

TERM + TERM +TERM

eagles + “vancouver island” + nesting

The advantage of a Boolean search is obvious. You get to the information you need faster and easier. The more specific you can be with your search terms, the more efficiently you will find the information that you are after. And by really thinking through your search terms from a vague beginning to a detailed search, you will find that you have an even better sense of the topic that you are researching.

Note that most search engines have an “advanced search” option that will also allow you to compose a search with many terms. Try this if you wish to have more guidance than you would composing your own Boolean search.

## Researching Skills

# Evaluating Your Sources

Before you decide to use a source for your project, you need to ask these questions:

Who?

- Who wrote it?
- What are the author's qualifications, if any?
- Did the author include contact information?

What?

- What information did you find?
- Why did the author create it?
- Who is the target audience?
- Is the author being objective or biased?
- Is there any obvious conflict of interest?
- Advertisements?

When?

- When was this source published?
- Is the information current?

Where?

- Where was this information found?
- Is it a reputable source?
- If the source is a Web site, whose site is it?
- What organization sponsors the Web site?

If you are using the Internet (and you should if you have access to it!) remember that searching the Web can be like mining for gold. You have to go through tons of rock to find the gold nuggets!