

USING GEOGRAPHY TO INTERPRET THE PRESENT AND PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

Geography provides a means to look at the past, present and future. Events and issues, regardless of their past, present or future nature, have a geographical context. The geographical context is important to explain what happened – or what may happen – and where, and what the consequences were or might be.

National Geography Curriculum Standard 18: How to apply geography to interpret the present and plan for the future.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

With our ever-changing economy, students must learn to think about the “geography” of their future – before they decide on a career.

- Where do you want to live? What size of family do you want? How many years are you willing to attend post-secondary school?
- What’s the future labor market demand where you want to live? What’s the annual cost of living there? Can you support the family you plan to have?
- What’s the current demand in other locations for the career you’ve chosen? How long will that demand last?
- Why is there not much demand for the career you’ve chosen – or why is there a big demand for the career you’ve chosen – in the location you’ve chosen?

The activity below will help students “jump-start” their life planning process.

STUDENT PREPARATION

1. Where do you want to live in the future? _____
2. Do you want a family? _____ Do you want children? _____ If so, how many? _____
3. Go to the **Family Budget Calculator**: <http://www.epi.org/resources/budget>
Select your **Family Type**, the **State** where you want to live, the **Area Name** (city), and click on **Calculate budget**.
4. This is an estimate of how much it will cost you/your family to live in your selected location.
5. On the attached document, **Geographic Cost of Living Comparison** (for two parents, two children), note the example cost of living for the designated locations at the top of the page. Below that, note the blank items.
6. Using the **Family Budget Calculator**, find information for your selected location(s) and fill in the blanks of the attached document, **Geographic Cost of Living vs. Entry Level Salaries**.

STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS

1. Now that you have determined what kind of family you plan to have, where you want to live, and the base-line of how much money you will need, it's time to explore possible careers, salaries, educational requirements and labor market projections.
2. Explore the websites listed below (or other appropriate sites you may find).
 - **RUReadyND.com** for “hot jobs” and high demand/high salary careers in your state.
 - Do a web search for “hot jobs” and high demand/high salary careers in another state.
 - (state name) workforce development board
 - (state name) hot jobs
 - (state name) high-demand high-salary jobs
3. As you explore, use the lower portion of the **Geographic Cost of Living vs. Entry Level Salaries** document to list the appropriate information for multiple careers, along with the required educational level, **entry-level** salaries and labor market projections (job growth rate).
4. Find a career/location with a very high growth rate and a high entry-level salary. Determine a geographical explanation for why the salary and demand is so high.
5. Find a career/location with a low growth rate and a low entry-level salary. Determine a geographical explanation for why the salary and demand is so low.

STUDENT DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION

1. Discuss what you learned about yourself AND careers AND job demand.
2. Write a brief journal entry in your portfolio listing and explaining:
 - Five things you learned about yourself and careers.
 - Three reasons why there is not much demand for the career you've chosen – or why there is a big demand for the career you've chosen – in the location you've chosen.