

Explore



Curious About Careers

A Self-help Tool

Introduction

There are different approaches to careers research. Some are very focused and analytical, and some are more exploratory. This tool takes an exploratory, curiosity-led approach. It invites you to keep an open mind as you encounter new ideas; to look at a career, or a range of careers, and ask yourself a simple question - 'What might interest me about this?' - and see where this takes you.

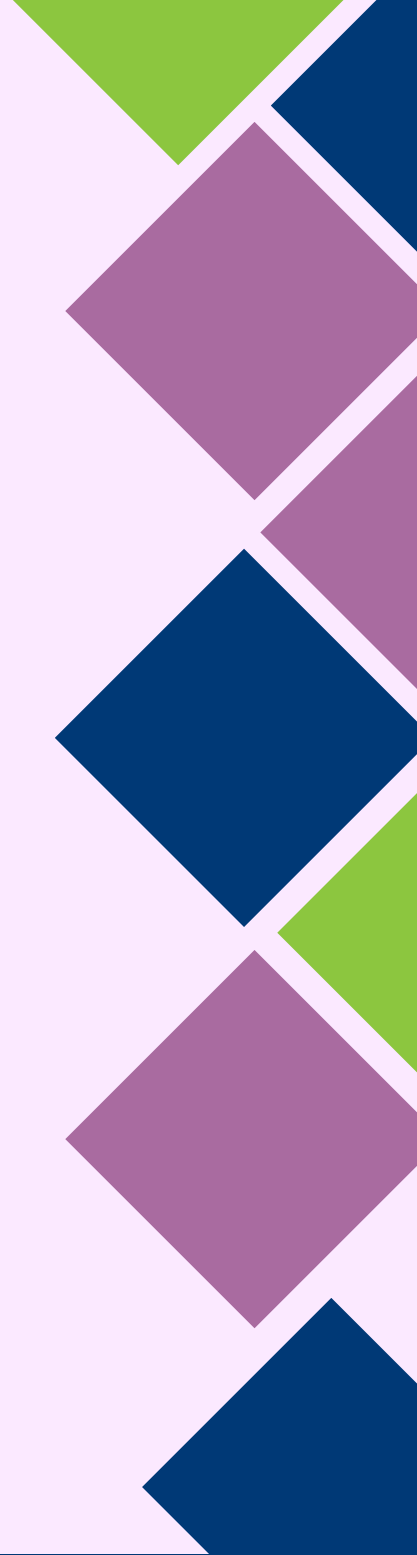
Being curious about what careers are like is really important. It is too easy to assume that we know what a career is like. But when we take a closer look, we may be surprised to find that something we thought was unappealing offers unexpected positives, for instance. Any career comes in different shapes and sizes. For example, being an accountant for a large retail chain will feel very different from being an accountant for a small computer games company. So, when you start looking at careers, it helps to be curious about the different sorts of organisation that someone might work in too.

This tool is designed to...

- Help you keep an open mind as you look into new career ideas.
 - Help you keep track of your reactions and provide a prompt for further research later.
 - Use your intuition.
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Consider using this tool if you...

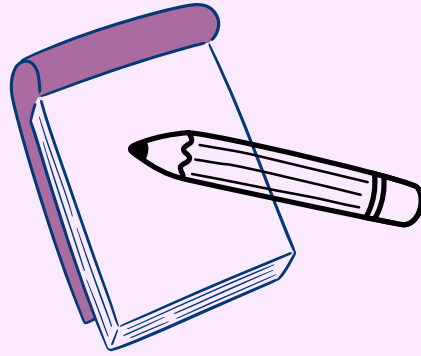
- Want to start your careers research without closing down your options.
- Want to look at a number of careers quickly without getting bogged down in the detail.
- Need to make an initial assessment of career options, before more in-depth analysis.



How to use this tool:

There are two ways you might use this tool. The first approach is suitable if you have multiple careers in mind, whilst the second tool will focus on one specific career. In both cases, you should use this tool when you are in a positive frame of mind, as research suggests that a positive mood is important for getting in touch with our intuition [Kahneman, 2011, p69, citing Bolte, et al, 2003). To prime yourself for positivity, you might do something as simple as listening to uplifting music for 5 minutes, watching comedy clips, or recalling a happy time in your life.

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First, if you have some career ideas in mind, write these in the table on the next slide.

For each career idea, take a while to read about it. We have put links in the References and Resources section at the end to some of the main careers websites. Do this in a fairly light-touch way, so you can quickly scan a lot of careers, though if you really get drawn into a particular career, then take as long as you want to read up on it. Just do not let the exercise become a chore. Remember, this is about being curious. It is your opportunity to find out about things that sound interesting. Pick things you want to know about, rather than making it something you have to do. Remember, you are just curiously looking at ideas. Nobody will make you do any of them. Each is just one of many possibilities - keep an open mind.

In this exercise, the key question is ‘What aspect(s) intrigue(s) me?’ Something which intrigues you is something which makes you want to know more about it. Is it as good as it seems? Or is it as bad as it seems? What might that thing be like to do in practice? What benefits might it offer me? In short, it raises further questions that you want to find the answers to.

Career	What stood out most for me about this career? (This may be positive or negative.)	What aspect(s) of the career intrigues me?	Now, what do I want to find out more about?	How can I do this?	When do I want to do this?

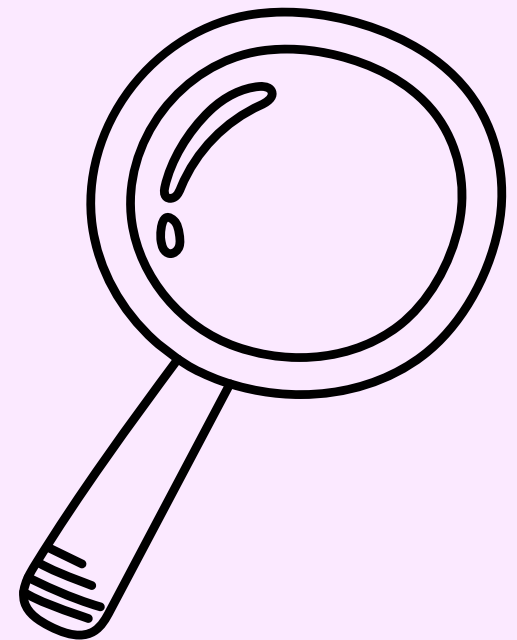
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Second, alternatively, if you don't have many career ideas, you can take one idea and use it to branch off to other careers.

This is slightly different from the first approach, and it is very much up to you which you use. For this approach, you will need just one idea of a career which you think might appeal, to start with.

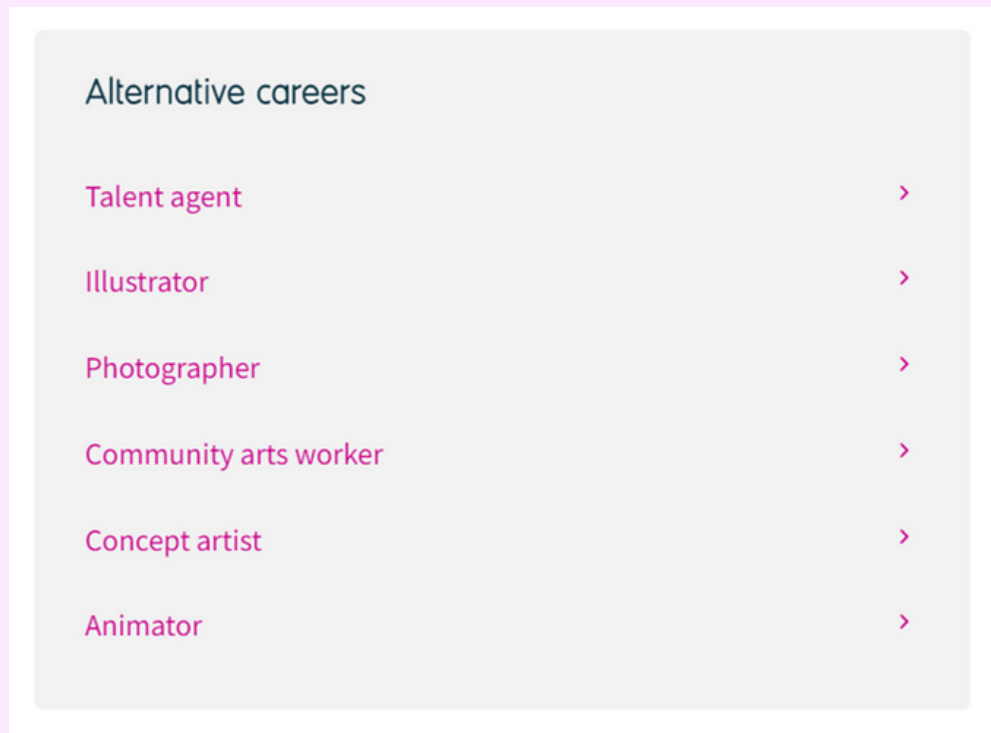
Take that career and read up about it in Prospects, using the Job Profile section:

<https://www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles>



At the end of the article, you will find a section called 'Alternative Careers'. This is a non-exhaustive list of other careers which are related to the one featured in the main article. click through to any that appeal. And then repeat the process; all the time following those that pique your interest.

The screenshot below shows the Alternative Careers listed at the end of the Fine Artist jobs profile.



In the following example, we have shown how you could start from being interested in being a Fine Artist, and then branch out to other careers which spark your curiosity.

The following slide shows a spider diagram, to visualise how you can move from one Job Profile to another.

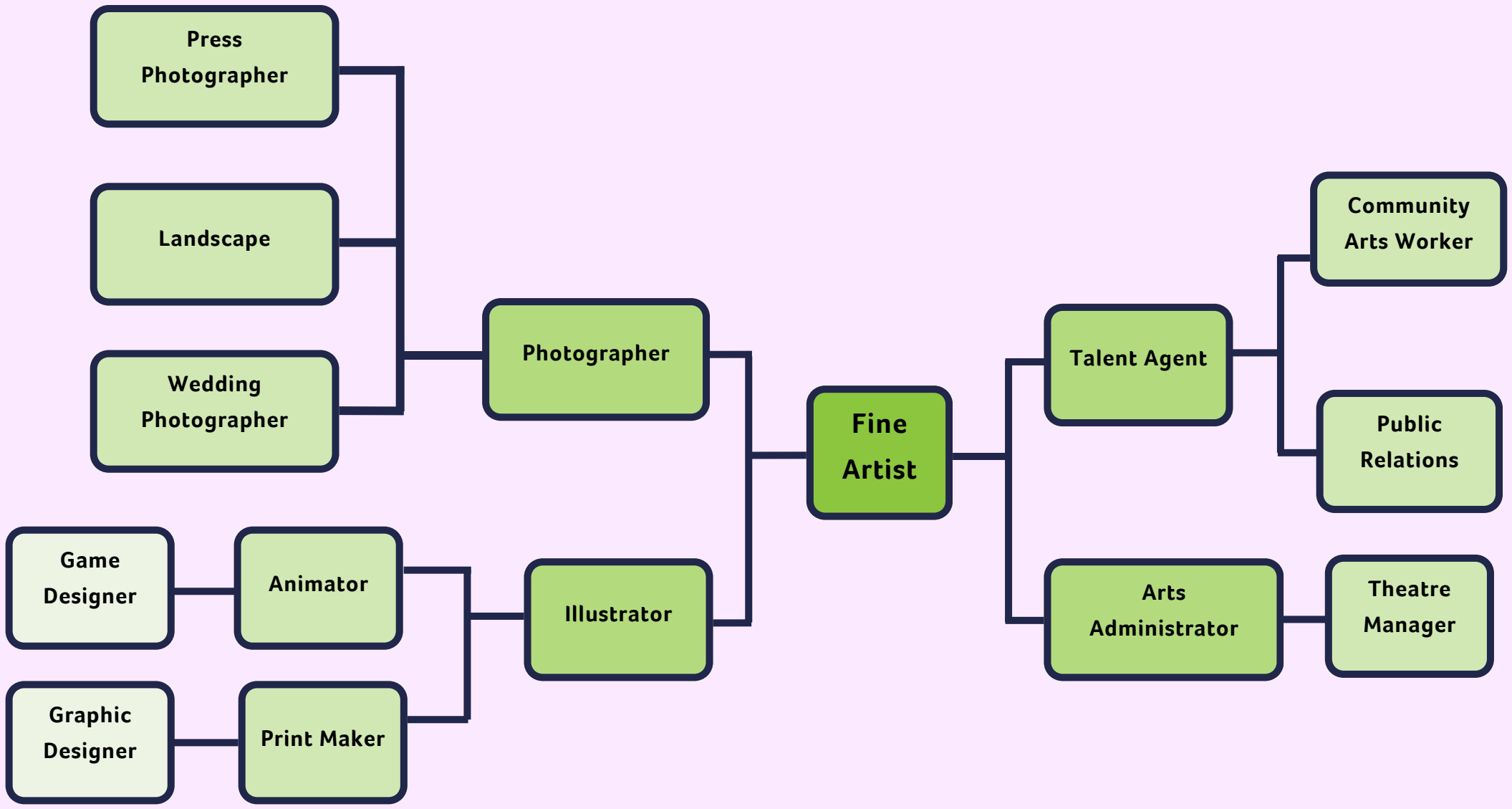
The left-hand branch picks out some careers using artistic skills and, in the case of Photographer, uses the 'Employers' section as well.

The right hand set of branches takes careers which might benefit from an appreciation of art and culture.

The sub-branches generally move further from this.

The person has designated two of particular focus: Community Development Worker and Secondary School (Arts) Teacher, as both offer a chance to serve the community, one without art and the other with art.







Pause, Reflect, Act.

- Which careers have really grabbed your attention and excite you?
- Do they have things in common?
- What do they tell you about your interests, values and strengths?
- What directions do they point in (groups or jobs, employment sectors, etc.)?
- Which do you want to look into in more depth?
- What practically do you want to do now to take forward the insights from this exercise?
- Who could help you with this?
- Which other Self-help Tools would you like to look at next?

NB: Because everyone is different and no one solution on its own is necessarily a magic bullet, please look at our other Self-help Tools as well, and use the ones that work best for you.

If this exercise has been uncomfortable to complete, or has simply raised issues you wish to consider further, you are welcome to talk through your feelings with a member of the [Careers and Employability Service](#) in a confidential setting, by booking a careers appointment via the CES website, or by using the [Wellbeing Services](#).

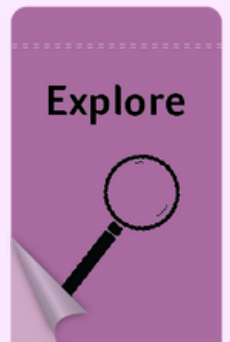
References and Resources

Kahneman, D. (2011). Thinking Fast and Slow. (1st ed.). Allen Lane.

[Prospects.ac.uk](#) provides the widest range of graduate career profile and information on different job sectors.

[Target Jobs](#) provides a wide range of graduate careers information.

Dave Stanbury, Feb, 2023



If you are a member of staff from another educational organisation and want to use a limited number of our Self help Tools with your students, we'd love to hear from you and share good practice. We'd ask that you retain references to University of Huddersfield as a matter of courtesy, and acknowledge the other sources we've used. Thank you.