

Career Explorations

Course Duration (to be determined by LEA)	6 weeks (24 hours) OR 9 weeks (35 hours) OR 1 semester (70 hours) OR 1 year (140 hours)
Grade Levels	6-8
Prerequisites	

Career Explorations is designed to provide opportunities for students to explore career opportunities and become aware of the importance of basic technology, work ethics, communication skills, the value of work, leadership skills, and basic employability skills. Students will begin investigating career paths to match their interests and abilities, which builds the foundation for future course selection and postsecondary options.

Career Explorations may be offered as a component of a course rotation allowing students to explore different areas of interest. All content standards must be addressed regardless of the duration of the course. The depth of the content standards will be determined by the course duration.

Foundational standards, shown in the table below, are an important part of every course. Through these standards, students learn and apply safety concepts, explore career opportunities and requirements, practice the skills needed to succeed in the workplace, develop leadership qualities and take advantage of the opportunities afforded by Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs), learn and practice essential digital literacy skills, and participating in one or more of the four facets of Work-Based Learning (awareness, exploration, participation, and training). The foundational standards are to be incorporated throughout the course.

Each foundational standard completes the stem “*Students will...*”

Foundational Standards

1. Incorporate safety procedures in handling, operating, and maintaining tools and machinery; handling materials; utilizing personal protective equipment; maintaining a safe work area; and handling hazardous materials and forces.
2. Demonstrate effective workplace and employability skills, including communication, awareness of diversity, positive work ethic, problem-solving, time management, and teamwork.
3. Explore the range of careers available in the field and investigate their educational requirements, and demonstrate job-seeking skills including resume-writing and interviewing.

4. Advocate and practice safe, legal, responsible, and ethical use of information and technology tools specific to the industry pathway.
5. Participate in a Career and Technical Student Organization (CTSO) to increase knowledge and skills and to enhance leadership and teamwork.
6. Discuss and demonstrate ways to value diversity.

CAREER EXPLORATIONS CONTENT STANDARDS

Each content standard completes the stem “*Students will...*”

Technology

1. Demonstrate basic hardware and software technology skills in using digital devices.
Examples: using a personal computer, managing files, using the Internet, using application programs

Work Ethics

2. Explain personal and societal benefits of participating in the workforce.

Communication Skills

3. Deliver workplace presentations that utilize eye contact, clear enunciation, and visual aids during presentations to enhance and sustain listeners’ attention and interest.
 - a. Identify, select, and prepare support materials to accompany a workplace presentation, including tables, charts, and technology.
4. Utilize active listening skills to obtain, clarify, and summarize information in the workplace.
5. Summarize written materials from various career resources clearly, succinctly, and accurately.

Employability Skills

6. Demonstrate positive work behaviors and personal qualities, including willingness to acquire new knowledge and skills, integrity in a work situation, and willingness to follow rules and procedures.
7. Describe employment skills needed for obtaining and maintaining a job.
Examples: punctuality, communication, attention to detail

Leadership

- 8. Demonstrate interpersonal skills, including teamwork, conflict management, problem-solving, and networking.
- 9. Research and demonstrate leadership skills for creating an environment that fosters mutual trust and respect.

Career Opportunities

- 10. Locate resources to determine job and career opportunities related to fields covered in the Alabama Career and Technical Education Clusters.
 - a. Describe each of the Alabama Career and Technical Education Clusters.
- 11. Identify employment opportunities to match personal interests and aptitudes.
- 12. Create a personal plan of study to meet career goals and objectives and cite resources used to create the plan.

Career Preparedness	
Course Credit	1.0 (All content standards are required) OR as two sequential one-half credit courses, divided as follows: 0.5 Career Preparedness A (Standards 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 17, and 18 are required) AND 0.5 Career Preparedness B (Standards 4, 5, 7, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, and 24 are required)
Grade Levels	9-12* <i>*NOTE: Career Preparedness A may be taught in Grade 8 for one-half credit, to be followed by Career Preparedness B in Grades 9-12 for one-half credit.</i>
Prerequisites	Career Preparedness A is the prerequisite to Career Preparedness B

Career Preparedness focuses on three integrated areas of instruction: academic planning and career development, financial literacy, and technology. Course content includes college and career preparation, computer literacy skills, and personal finance. Technology topics are interwoven throughout course instruction. These standards are designed to provide a strong foundation for student acquisition of the skills, attitudes, and knowledge that enable them to achieve success in school, at work, and across the life span.

Other topics addressed in Career Preparedness are business and industry, continuing education, and lifelong learning. Partnerships and alliances between educational institutions, governmental entities and employers can support these standards and connect students to potential career opportunities.

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Each foundational standard completes the stem “*Students will...*”

Foundational Standards	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Incorporate safety procedures in handling, operating, and maintaining tools and machinery; handling materials; utilizing personal protective equipment; maintaining a safe work area; and handling hazardous materials and forces.
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2. Demonstrate effective workplace and employability skills, including communication, awareness of diversity, positive work ethic, problem-solving, time management, and teamwork.
3. Explore the range of careers available in the field and investigate their educational requirements, and demonstrate job-seeking skills including resume-writing and interviewing.
4. Advocate and practice safe, legal, responsible, and ethical use of information and technology tools specific to the industry pathway.
5. Participate in a Career and Technical Student Organization (CTSO) to increase knowledge and skills and to enhance leadership and teamwork.
6. Participate in a work-based learning continuum.

CAREER PREPAREDNESS CONTENT STANDARDS

Each content standard completes the stem “*Students will...*”

Personal Decision-making

1. Utilize a systematic decision-making process which considers opportunity costs and trade-offs to make academic, career, and financial decisions.

Academic Planning and Career Development

2. Research and report on the positive and negative effects of various workplace behaviors.
 - a. Identify inappropriate workplace behaviors, including violence and harassment, and procedures for reporting and addressing such behaviors.
3. Analyze personal skills, interests, and abilities and relate them to career opportunities.
 - a. Participate in assessments that identify personal areas of interest and aptitude, and utilize results to develop a high school educational plan.
 - b. Research and share information about individual career options from the 16 National Career Clusters, including specific job descriptions, requirements, salaries, and employment outlooks.

4. Match personal preference, education, and training to demands of particular jobs.
 - a. Select a personal career goal based upon results of interest and aptitude assessments.
 - b. Investigate employee benefits and incentives related to identified career choices.
Examples: retirement benefits; options for medical, life, and disability insurance; profit-sharing
 - c. Calculate net pay from a given gross salary by subtracting required and optional deductions.
 - d. Utilize database features including merging, sorting, filtering, and formulas to analyze data regarding the effects of career choice on lifestyle, including how interests, ability, and educational achievement relate to the attainment of personal, social, educational, and career goals.
5. Investigate and present information on the postsecondary admissions process, including means of paying for higher education.
Examples: grants, loans, personal financing, tuition reimbursement
 - a. Complete admission, scholarship, and financial aid applications for postsecondary education.
Example: Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
6. Complete steps of the employment process, including searching for a job, filling out a job application, writing a resume, demonstrating interview skills, and completing required employment forms.
Examples: W-4, I-9
 - a. Gather and present information concerning online resources for finding employment, including professional networking.
7. Generate an electronic portfolio using digital tools.
Examples: cover letter; current resume; completed job application; interest, aptitude, and achievement assessment results; curriculum samples (academic research, educational projects); four-year high school educational plan; education/career preparedness checklist; examples of academic and career preparedness achievements (student organizations, club memberships, honors, credentials, certificates, awards, community service experiences, recommendations)

Digital Literacy

8. Diagnose problems for hardware, software, and advanced network systems and identify possible solutions for common technology issues.
Examples: printer, projector, power supply, task manager, network connectivity, firewalls
9. Use digital tools, including multimedia, to create, review, and revise authentic products.
 - a. Utilize advanced features of word processing, including outlining, developing forms, tracking changes, hyperlinking, and mail merging.
 - b. Utilize spreadsheet features, including formulas, functions, sorting, filtering, charts, and graphs.
 - c. Create presentations using effective communication skills and advanced features of multimedia, including photo, video, and audio editing.
 - d. Demonstrate how to compress, convert, secure, import, export, share, and back up files and transfer data among applications.
 - e. Demonstrate how to set up, conduct, attend, and participate in virtual meetings and conferences.
10. Research and report on the functions and types of the most common computer and mobile device operating systems.
Examples: Windows, Mac OS, Linux, Android, iOS
11. Analyze the effects of current technologies on culture, society, economy, environment, and politics and predict possible future innovations.
 - a. Demonstrate proficiency in the use of emerging technology resources, including electronic communications.

12. Demonstrate appropriate digital citizenship through safe, ethical, and legal use of technology systems and digital content.
 - a. Explain consequences of inappropriate, illegal, and unethical use of technology systems and digital content.

Examples: cyberbullying, plagiarism, phishing, hoaxes, impersonation, baiting, spoofing, inappropriate sexual communications
 - b. Gather, evaluate, and share information about copyright laws and policies regarding ownership and use of digital content.
 - c. Explain the implications of creating and maintaining a positive digital footprint.
 - d. Critique Internet and digital information for validity, reliability, accuracy, bias, and current relevance.
 - e. Cite sources of digital content using a style manual.

Examples: Modern Language Association (MLA), American Psychological Association (APA)
13. Utilize an online learning-management system to engage in goal-oriented, focused, project-based, and inquiry-oriented collaborative learning projects, discussions, and online assessments beyond the traditional classroom.
14. Explain specific steps that consumers can take to minimize online exposure to identity theft, fraudulent schemes, unethical sales practices, and exorbitant service fees.
 - a. Describe the uses and limitations of online safety precautions, including data-encryption, password strength, clearing browser cache, firewalls, and antivirus software.

Financial Management and Budgeting

15. Develop a personal plan for managing income, expenses, savings, and charitable contributions, using spreadsheets, online resources, or commercial software.
 - a. Create and adjust budgets, net worth statements, and income/expense statements using a spreadsheet or other financial planning tool.
 - b. Identify types of income other than wages, including rental income, interest, and profit earned from various sources.
 - c. Investigate, evaluate, and share information about various methods for acquiring goods and making major purchases.
Examples: borrowing, renting, leasing, paying cash
 - d. Compare costs of goods and services to determine best value, including sales tax, tips, coupons, discounts, product quality, and unit pricing.
 - e. Explain how to use different payment methods, including cash, debit card, credit card, electronic payments via mobile devices or online, checks, payroll cards, layaway plans, and automatic bank deductions.

Banking and Financial Institutions

16. Describe the functions, advantages, and disadvantages of various types of financial institutions.
Examples: central banks, retail and commercial banks, Internet banks, credit unions, savings and loan associations, investment banks and companies, brokerage firms, insurance companies
 - a. Evaluate services and related costs associated with personal banking at various financial institutions.
Examples: checking and savings accounts, personal checks, cashier's checks, overdraft fees, online banking
17. Manage checking and savings accounts, balance bank statements, and use online financial services.

Credit and Debt

18. Explain advantages and disadvantages of using credit.
 - a. Assess ways that credit card terms affect the cost of using credit and the impact of those costs on personal finances.
Examples: annual percentage rate (APR), grace period, fees, methods of calculating interest

19. Explain why credit ratings and credit reports are important to consumers.
- List ways of building and maintaining a good credit score.
Examples: credit card utilization, closing credit accounts, quantity of credit cards
 - Determine the implications of entering into contracts and binding agreements.
Examples: cell phone contracts, rent-to-own agreements, subscription services, automatic enrollments
 - Compare different types of loans and their advantages and disadvantages, including college loans, payday loans, personal and/or signature loans, vehicle loans, collateral loans, passbook loans, and home mortgages.
 - Describe legal and illegal types of credit that carry high interest rates, including payday loans, rent-to-buy agreements, and loan-sharking.
 - Gather and share information about requirements and eligibility for filing bankruptcy, including means tests and credit counseling.
 - Assess the effects of bankruptcy filings on the consumer, including Chapter 7, Chapter 11, and Chapter 13.
20. Gather, evaluate, and share information about saving for short-term goals.
Examples: holiday savings accounts, “rainy day” or emergency funds, passbook savings accounts
21. Gather, evaluate, and share information about investing for income, retirement, and other long-term goals, indicating advantages and disadvantages of various forms of investment.
Examples: mutual funds, exchange-traded funds (ETFs), stocks, bonds, certificates of deposit (CDs), real estate, commodities; compound interest, Rule of 72

Saving and Investing

Risk Management and Insurance

22. Determine the types of insurance available to deal with different risks, including automobile, personal and professional liability, homeowner's, renter's, property, health, life, long-term care, and disability.
 - a. Identify factors that affect the cost of insurance.
 - b. Identify perils that are insurable.

Examples: injury, loss, destruction
23. Summarize safety and health standards in the workplace for daily procedures, emergency procedures, equipment and tools, dress, use of technology, and work area maintenance.
24. Develop a plan for financial and personal security in the event of disaster, including secure storage of financial records and personal documents, available cash reserve, household inventory, medical records retention, wills, and living wills.

Taxes

25. Explain why taxes are necessary, including how they are used at local, state, and federal levels.
26. Gather and share information about types of taxes paid by individuals, families, and businesses.

Examples: sales, property, fuel, Social Security, Medicare, and income taxes

 - a. Research and explain how taxpayers receive information about taxes owed.

Examples: sales, property, fuel, Social Security, Medicare, and income taxes
27. Gather and share information regarding how taxes are computed and collected.

<h1>Workforce Readiness</h1>	
Course Credit	1.0
Grade Levels	9-12
Prerequisites	

Workforce Readiness standards are designed to provide students with academic and occupational skills that are transferable across jobs and occupational areas. Emphasis is placed on academic foundations for careers, applied technology, career development and employment, entrepreneurship and business economics, social and ethical responsibility, leadership, teamwork, safety and health.

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<h2>Foundational Standards</h2>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Incorporate safety procedures in handling, operating, and maintaining tools and machinery; handling materials; utilizing personal protective equipment; maintaining a safe work area; and handling hazardous materials and forces. 2. Demonstrate effective workplace and employability skills, including communication, awareness of diversity, positive work ethic, problem-solving, time management, and teamwork. 3. Explore the range of careers available in the field and investigate their educational requirements, and demonstrate job-seeking skills including resume-writing and interviewing. 4. Advocate and practice safe, legal, responsible, and ethical use of information and technology tools specific to the industry pathway.
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5. Participate in a Career and Technical Student Organization (CTSO) to increase knowledge and skills and to enhance leadership and teamwork.
6. Participate in a work-based learning continuum.

WORKFORCE READINESS CONTENT STANDARDS

Each content standard completes the stem “*Students will...*”

Career Development and Employability Skills

1. Research and compare career opportunities that are related to individual aptitude, skills, interests, and abilities.
2. Describe the relationship between career planning and educational achievement.
 - a. Research a chosen profession and outline an academic plan to prepare for that profession, including any degrees and certifications that are prerequisites for employment.
3. Demonstrate how to locate, evaluate, and identify career opportunities for a specific career.
 - a. Utilize career resources, career ladders, and career webs.
 - b. Research and report on employment trends and opportunities for career advancement.
 - c. Analyze the impact of population, climate, and geographic location on occupational opportunities.
4. Explain the impact of continued education and career training on financial stability and lifestyle freedom.
5. Demonstrate, both virtually and in real-world settings, the skills needed for seeking, obtaining, maintaining, and changing jobs.
 - a. Gather and share detailed information about job openings and opportunities locally and in various geographical regions.
6. Gather, evaluate, and share information concerning opportunities and benefits of obtaining business- and industry-recognized credentials within a selected career pathway.

Workplace Foundations

7. Demonstrate computation skills in the workplace.
 - a. Solve addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division problems quickly and accurately using mental methods, paper-and-pencil, or other tools to handle workplace demands.
Examples: make precision measurements, read and interpret blueprints, convert between customary and metric units of measurement
8. Gather, share, and apply information on strategies for conflict resolution in the workplace.
9. Identify and practice behaviors that promote positive workplace relationships.

Ethics and Social Responsibility

10. Write an argument supporting the need for guidelines for ethical behavior in the workplace.

Safety and Health

11. Discuss legal issues, laws, and workplace regulations related to employment.
 - a. Identify legal issues affecting the workplace.
Examples: diversity, sexual harassment
 - b. Identify the areas of influence of laws and regulations governing workplace policies.
Examples: Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) rules, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations
 - c. Explain how worker safety regulations protect employees and employers, researching and citing specific instances of consequences when rules were or were not followed.
12. Formulate a sample workplace safety plan that describes strategies students and employers can use to develop or maintain a safe work environment.
Examples: Create a checklist to report on potential dangers in an office environment such as frayed electrical cords, overloaded electrical outlets, missing or damaged surge protectors, and equipment placed too close to heat sources. List the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) necessary for industrial settings.

<p style="text-align: center;">Applied Technology</p>	<p>13. Describe the benefits of maintaining a positive digital footprint and explain the consequences of unethical or unwise online behaviors for employment and employability.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. List components of a digital footprint and explain how it can affect online privacy and one’s reputation. b. Assess how different parts of a digital footprint can have positive or negative impacts on employment.
<p style="text-align: center;">Leadership</p>	<p>14. Research and summarize information on leadership skills and practices.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Gather and share information on leadership styles. b. Discuss how effective and ineffective communication impacts various workplace scenarios. <i>Examples: using proper terminology in communication, being inclusive of team members</i> <p>15. Investigate a selected company’s vision and mission statements, goals, and objectives.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Describe products and services offered by a specific company, and explain how they relate to the company’s mission statement and goals. b. Identify the job titles and describe the roles and responsibilities of various employees in selected companies.
<p style="text-align: center;">Technical Knowledge and Skills</p>	<p>16. Determine uses, capabilities, and limitations of technological tools for reaching personal and workplace goals.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identify common tools, equipment, machines, and materials required for a selected job.
<p style="text-align: center;">Economics and Finance</p>	<p>17. Gather, evaluate, and share information on the nature of entrepreneurship and how it influences the American economy.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Explain advantages and disadvantages of entrepreneurship. <p>18. Describe how employment documents and financial records are used for setting up deductions, filing taxes, and planning personal budgets. <i>Examples: I-9, 1099, W-2, W-4</i></p>