

Success in the Health Care Industry

This activity will give you an opportunity to consider your potential to find success in the health care industry. The following dataset includes information for nine of the fastest-growing careers in health care. Each position includes the following elements:

1. A brief description of its duties
2. Educational and licensure requirements
3. The outlook for the future of a job in terms of both job availability as well as opportunities for advancement
4. The general stress level of the job with respect to the complexity of its duties, as well as the level of patient demand
5. The overall flexibility of the job with respect to being able to choose your own hours, perform a variety of duties, and get involved in other aspects of the profession

We've already filled in the first column together. You should fill in the remaining data based on what you've found through your research.

Review the data carefully. Then, compose a paragraph in which you argue for the career you think will be the best path to success.

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Handout 20.1 (Continued)

JOB	DESCRIPTION	EDUCATION REQUIRED	AVERAGE SALARY	OUTLOOK	STRESS	FLEXIBILITY
Physician	A "doctor" in the traditional sense of the word who specializes in a field of medicine such as neurology, pediatrics, or oncology.					
Nurse Practitioner	NPs work in private practices, hospitals, nursing homes, schools, and clinics—they may even make house calls—so their routines and schedules are anything but typical. NPs are very similar to physicians in that they can diagnose illnesses, prescribe medicines, and sometimes serve as primary caregivers.					
Registered Nurse	RNs are the frontline health care workers who monitor patients, administer medicines, chart progress, and attend to many different day-to-day needs.					
Occupational Therapist	Helps people with handicaps and disabilities adapt to the needs of day-to-day life.					
Physician's Assistant	Works under the supervision of a physician to interpret X-rays and blood tests, record patient progress, conduct routine physical exams, and treat a range of ailments.					
Dental Hygienist	Works alongside dentists to clean teeth and provide other forms of preventive care.					
Pharmacist	Handles all aspects of filling prescriptions, monitoring drugs for possible reactions, and advising patients on how to take medications.					
Medical Equipment Technician	Repairs and maintains all types of complex medical machinery, from MRI machines to X-ray equipment.					

Scenarios

DIRECTIONS: Read the following scenarios and *rank* the characters according to how successful they are. Place a "1" next to the character who you think is the most successful, all the way through to a "5" next to the character you think is the least successful.

_____ **Bryan** has always been passionate about computer programming. Throughout his childhood, he spent almost all of his free time practicing how to create games and programs. His efforts paid off when he applied to college because he earned a scholarship from MIT to study in their advanced computer engineering program. During his time at MIT, he created an original program as part of his senior project. The program was designed to help high school students find and apply for college scholarships by organizing many different scholarships into a single database and allowing users to apply easily by creating a profile and uploading their application materials to the site. By the time he graduated from MIT, the program was only half-finished. Bryan really wanted to keep working on the program, but right after he graduated he took a job working for Microsoft. Not only did his new job allow him very little time to work on the program, but when he took the job, he also had to sign a contract stating that he would not develop any programs that might compete with the interests of the company. Now, 5 years have passed, and Bryan has been making good money working for Microsoft, although he often finds his job very boring, and he wishes he had more freedom to pursue his own ideas.

_____ **Janessa** was thrilled to get her job at an international marketing firm because she'd always wanted to travel. Now, she was truly seeing the world. Each month would find her in new cities and new countries. She ate exotic foods made by some of the best chefs in the world; she stayed in luxurious, five-star hotels; she toured famous landmarks, took in beautiful views of mountains and beaches, and met all kinds of people. And through it all, she always enjoyed her job, too. It challenged her without stressing it out, and she found value in the work she was doing. Unfortunately, though, her job also created some problems in other aspects of her life. Her marriage fell apart after only a year. She rarely saw her family on the holidays. She barely knew her nieces and nephews who were growing up fast. And when her father died very suddenly, she regretted having spent so little time with him during the final months of his life. As much as Janessa loved her life, she sometimes wondered if she would be just as happy if she had a job that kept her closer to the people she cared about.

_____ Growing up in west Philly made **Ernesto** decide early on that he wanted to have a good career. The schools he attended weren't the best—they were overcrowded with few resources, and poverty and crime were major issues in the neighborhood. Nevertheless, his tenth-grade science teacher inspired him to want to study medicine and become a doctor. He worked hard through high school to get the grades he needed for college, and he was accepted into the pre-med program at Drexel University. Once he got to college, though, he really started to struggle. Even though his grades from high school were good, he realized that the quality of his classes was rather subpar. He was far behind the other students in his introductory chemistry and biology courses. His academic adviser worried that he wouldn't be able to meet the requirements for pre-med in time to graduate, and getting accepted to a good medical school would be an even greater challenge without a stronger background in math and science. At first, Ernesto took the news hard. He felt like the world had cheated him out of an opportunity. However, soon after, he discovered a program at Drexel designed to prepare students to become occupational therapists. It wasn't quite the same as being a doctor, but the educational requirements were much less steep and the field was growing rapidly.

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Ernesto changed his major, completed the program, and in no time found himself working as an OT at Jefferson Hospital. He loved the job. It was hard but rewarding work, and even though he would never make as much money or have as much status as a doctor, he was proud of what he was able to accomplish.

_____ **Rosalie** grew up in the shadow of her older sister, Nora. Nora was top of her class, a star athlete, and she went to college at the University of Pennsylvania. Now, Nora is a lawyer at a top firm where she is quickly rising through the ranks. Rosalie, on the other hand, worked hard through school, but earned mostly average grades. She went to community college and later finished a degree in elementary education at Temple. Now she works as a kindergarten teacher in Philadelphia. Her family is always bragging about Nora's success. Compared to Nora, Rosalie has always felt like her life was a lot less interesting. There certainly wasn't much there to brag about. However, while Nora's career always kept her from settling down, Rosalie now has a husband and two children. Her family is her entire life, and she loves the time she spends with her children. Her husband is a good man with a decent job in construction. They take vacations to the Jersey Shore and they're saving up for a trip to DisneyWorld. Even better still, her family pays a lot more attention to her now because of the kids. Even though the family still likes to brag about Nora's success, deep down in her heart Rosalie thinks she has the best life anyone could ever ask for.

_____ **Marcus** was always a very promising young person. Even a short conversation with him would reveal that he was very intelligent and good with people. He had a natural curiosity for many things, and he would read books on his own just to learn about things that interested him. In school, good grades came easily to him, but he never seemed too eager to challenge himself. He avoided taking the most advanced classes even though his teachers constantly encouraged him to do so. Marcus didn't see the point. He could read and learn about things on his own. After high school, Marcus went to college. It seemed like the thing he was supposed to do. But he didn't enjoy it at all. The classes were boring, and he had no real connection to anything he was learning about. He dropped out after his first semester and started working a series of different jobs: he waited tables at restaurants, sold ads for a website, painted houses, and even worked for a short while as a youth counselor for a neighborhood organization. As the years passed, it seemed like Marcus was always up to something new, moving from city to city and working different jobs. At one point, he went to Europe for a year and lived off the money he made playing poker! Through it all, his friends and family always looked down on him. They thought he had missed his true potential, and they would ask him when he was going to make up his mind and do something with his life. But for Marcus, he already was doing something with his life. The variety of it was the thing he liked the most. He never felt any desire to settle on just one thing to do or one place to live. He liked his life just the way it was, and if other people disapproved, that was just because they didn't understand.

JOB TITLE	DESCRIPTION	EDUCATION	SALARY (AVG.)	OUTLOOK	STRESS	FLEXIBILITY
Physician	A "doctor" in the traditional sense of the word who specializes in a field of medicine such as neurology, pediatrics, or oncology.	Bachelor's degree in biology or pre-med. High GPA needed. High scores on MCAT exam. Five to seven years of post-college education.	\$180,000	Growing field with many opportunities for advancement. Some physicians go into research instead of seeing patients.	Very High	Average
Nurse Practitioner	NPs are very similar to physicians in that they can diagnose illnesses, prescribe medicines, and sometimes serve as primary caregivers.	Must first meet all requirements as a registered nurse. Then, must complete 3–5 years of additional schooling and pass additional licensure exams.	\$90,000	Growing field that is becoming increasingly more regulated. Therefore, the educational requirements may become more rigorous. Not much room to advance further.	High	Below Average
Registered Nurse	RNs are the frontline health care workers who monitor patients, administer medicines, chart progress, and attend to many different day-to-day needs.	Bachelor's degree in nursing and pass national licensure exam.	\$60,000	Highly growing field that is becoming more diverse as some RNs become involved in clinical research. Advancement requires further education and licensure.	High	Average
Occupational Therapist	Help people with handicaps and disabilities adapt to the needs of day-to-day life.	Bachelor's degree, master's degree, licensure exam, and a certain number of hours of field experience.	\$75,000	Highly growing field that is slightly diversifying as it becomes more "scientific." Some opportunity for advancement.	Average	Average

Handout 20.1 (Continued)

JOB TITLE	DESCRIPTION	EDUCATION	SALARY (AVG.)	OUTLOOK	STRESS	FLEXIBILITY
Physician's Assistant	Works under the supervision of a physician to interpret X-rays and blood tests, record patient progress, conduct routine physical exams, and treat a range of ailments.	Bachelor's and master's degree plus supervised clinical training of 100+ hours and national licensure exam.	\$90,000	Considered to be one of the fastest-growing professions in the country, while also boasting one of the lowest unemployment rates. Not much room for advancement, though, and PAs are always in the "shadow" of regular physicians.	High	Average
Dental Hygienist	Works alongside dentists to clean teeth and provide other forms of preventative care.	Minimum requirements include an associate's degree and completion of an accredited training program (approx. 330 exist). State certification is also required.	\$70,000	Growing field but few opportunities for advancement. Dental hygienists who want to become regular dentists still have to complete all of the normal requirements.	Low	High
Pharmacist	Handles all aspects of filling prescriptions, monitoring drugs for possible reactions, and advising patients on how to take medications.	Bachelor's degree plus 4-years in a Doctor of Pharmacy program. May also involve residencies. State and national licensure exams.	\$120,000	Growing field with great opportunities for advancement in both the clinical as well as the business aspects of the field. Advancement usually requires further training and licensure.	Very High	Very Low
Medical Equipment Technician	Repairs and maintains all types of complex medical machinery, from MRI machines to X-ray equipment.	Associate's degree is the minimum to get started. Most positions require continuing education to keep up with new technologies.	\$50,000	Growing field that is expected to nearly triple in size over the next 20 years. Opportunities for advancement are usually pretty good, although it can vary depending on the employer.	High	Low

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