



Career Exploration and Planning Substitute Teacher Guide

Created: 03/2025 by the National FFA Organization

This guide includes different options for curated and cohesive activities to leave for students when you need to be away from your classroom for a varying number of days.

****Each plan includes links to all resources, which are fully editable to suit the needs of your classroom and students.***

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One-Day Plans

Linked below are several National FFA Educator Resources to select from that would work well to leave for your students when you will be away from your classroom for a single day. Click on each link to access the materials for that activity.

Resource	Time	Description
AgExplorer Exploration	30 minutes	Students will spend time on the AgExplorer website and respond to questions about the site.
AgExplorer Video Activity	30 minutes	Students will watch a video from the AgExplorer video center, complete an activity while watching and then find a corresponding career on AgExplorer to complete a second activity.
Battle of the Best Agriculture Careers	90 minutes	Students will fill out a bracket to narrow down agriculture careers to their favorite one and then create a slide show about the best career.
Career Article Analysis	45 minutes	Students will read one of the articles in the 2024-25 Edition of the AgCareers.com Food and Agriculture Career Guide and complete a worksheet.
Career Pathways for Me	40 minutes	Students will use the AgCareers.com Career Profiles website to view all ten career pathways to learn more about each of them and select two pathways they are most interested in and complete the activity sheet.
Career Pathways Video Analysis	25 minutes	Students will watch one of the career focus area videos on AgExplorer and complete the worksheet.
Career Profile	30 minutes	Students will use AgExplorer to research one career and create a social media profile for the career using the provided template.
Charting Her Path: FFA New Horizons Article	50 minutes	Students will read an <i>FFA New Horizons</i> article about a woman who left the field of agriculture and then came back to it to start her own company. They will then explore their skills and how they could relate to future careers.
College Profile	30 minutes	Students will select a college or university of interest to research and complete the profile.
Discover Careers in Agriculture	30 minutes	Students will choose three agriculture careers that interest them and use AgExplorer to complete the handout for each career.
Employer Pathway Connections	50 minutes	Students will explore various company websites to learn more information about what they do, then design a series of social media posts for one of the companies.
Finding the Right Words	45 minutes	Students will read an article on using key words in resumes and career documents then evaluate a resume according to its key words.

More Than Money	40 minutes	Students will read an article about total compensation and then complete an activity to build their dream compensation package.
MyCareer Quiz: Matching My Interests	25 minutes	Students will complete the MyCareer Quiz on AgExplorer and answer questions based on their results.
Resumes: You're the Boss	45 minutes	Students will reflect on skills they believe individuals need to be successful in the workplace. Then, they will review two resumes for a job and evaluate them to select a successful candidate.
The Agriculture Career Matchmaker	65 minutes	Students will take on the role of a career matchmaker and make career recommendations based on four given profiles.
Unusual Careers in Ag: FFA New Horizons Article	50 minutes	Students will read an <i>FFA New Horizons</i> article on six unusual careers in agriculture and explore two careers using AgExplorer.
Vocabulary Activities (Word PDF)	50 minutes	A bank of eight vocabulary activities that students can either pick from or the teacher may choose one to assign. These activities can be used with any vocabulary list; however, you may want to try this list of career-related vocabulary terms for use with this guide.

Additionally, you can find some of these activities on a choice board linked below. This choice board is designed in a way that none of the activities require the completion of the other activities so you can provide options for your students when you need to be away from your classroom for a day.

Career Exploration and Planning Substitute Choice Board:

Word Document: <https://ffa.box.com/v/SubChoiceBoard-Careers>

PDF: <https://ffa.box.com/v/SubChoiceBoard-Careers-PDF>

Google Doc: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Fe3DstJQs1_iM-t_k5KSEqfNhwR8z5rwQMj7JtidHq8/copy

***Choice Board Note: All student activity sheets from the choice board will need to be printed and available in your classroom or posted on your school's learning management system for students to access to complete the activities.*

Three-Day Plans

Below are two options for cohesive plans that would work to leave for your students when you will be away from your classroom for three consecutive days. Each plan contains activities that connect well to each other as well as a sheet with daily introductory and closure activities/questions (bell work and exit tickets) to further connect the activities and concepts to each other. Each plan also includes the student learning objectives, a list of materials to print or post to your school's learning management system and ideas for extension activities.

Option 1: Career Exploration Using AgExplorer

[Click here to access the written plan that you may leave for your substitute.](#) ([Click here for the Google Docs version.](#))

You may edit this plan to fit the needs of your classroom and students.

Student Learning Objectives	Materials
After completing these activities, students will ... 1. Browse the AgExplorer platform to gain a bird's-eye view of agricultural careers. 2. Identify agricultural careers that best match their interests by completing an assessment. 3. Investigate agricultural careers. 4. Analyze career information and put it into their own words. 5. Create a career profile for two agricultural careers.	Student Activity Sheets to Print or Post: • Three-Day Substitute Daily Activity Sheet: Option 1 (Word PDF Google Doc) • AgExplorer Exploration Student Activity Sheet • MyCareer Quiz: Matching My Interests Student Activity Sheet • Career Profile Student Activity Sheet (two copies per student) • Career Profile Example (in the same document as the Career Profile sheet) Other Materials Needed: • Student devices with internet access
Vocabulary Terms	
1. Career 2. Career Pathway 3. Education/Training 4. Employer 5. Interest 6. Outlook 7. Salary 8. Skill	
Day-to-Day Plans	
Day 1: (50 minutes) 1. Bell Ringer: (Students will answer the following prompt on their Daily Activity Sheets.) First, record all the careers you can think of in the industry of agriculture. Then record as many careers as you can that you think are <u>not</u> related to agriculture. 2. Activity: Students will use their devices with internet access to access AgExplorer and complete the "AgExplorer Exploration" activity. 3. Exit Ticket: (Students will answer the following prompt on their Daily Activity Sheets.) While you were browsing AgExplorer, what are five things that stuck out to you that you would be interested in learning?	
Day 2: (50 minutes) 1. Bell Ringer: (Students will record the following on their Daily Activity Sheets.) a. Write down one career you would HATE to have. Beneath that career, explain why in five words or less. b. Write down one career you would LOVE to have. Beneath that career, explain why in five words or less. 2. Activity: Students will access the MyCareer Quiz on AgExplorer and answer all the multiple-choice questions to receive their results. They will then complete the "MyCareer Quiz: Matching My Interests" activity,	

answering the questions about their results. Additionally, have students answer the following reflection questions about their quizzes on the back of their papers:

1. Were you surprised by your MyCareer Quiz results? Why or why not?
2. What were four of the additional careers you matched with (outside of your top four)? Did any of these interest you? Why or why not?
3. As you were taking the quiz, what kinds of questions did you think were most important to you in revealing your best career matches? Why?
4. Could any of the careers you matched with also exist outside of agriculture? If so, which ones?

3. **Exit Ticket:** (Students will answer the following prompt on their Daily Activity Sheets.)
What was your overall impression of your MyCareer Quiz results? Could you see yourself working in any of these careers? Why or why not?

Day 3: (50 minutes)

1. **Bell Ringer:** (Students will answer the following prompt on their Daily Activity Sheets.)
Which of the careers from your MyCareer Quiz results are you most interested in learning more about? Why do those careers interest you more than the others?
2. **Activity:** Students will choose two of the careers from their MyCareer Quiz results from Day 2 and use [AgExplorer](#) to complete a "[Career Profile](#)" for each of them. There is an example career profile provided in the same document for students to reference if needed.
3. **Exit Ticket:** (Students will answer the following prompt on their Daily Activity Sheets.)
Choose one of the careers you prepared a profile for. Based on your research, create a hypothetical "Day in the Life" social media post for a person in that career. Your post should be five or six sentences long and include a drawing or photo.
 - a. Additionally, students will complete the "Top Five Things I Learned This Week" section of their Daily Activity Sheets.

Potential Extension Activities

- Have students learn more about the different career focus areas on AgExplorer by watching one or more of the career focus area videos and completing this [video analysis activity](#) for each video they watch.
- Students can learn about several specific agricultural careers directly from a person in that career by watching a video from the [AgExplorer Video Center](#) and completing the "[AgExplorer Video Activity](#)."
- Have students dive deeper into career pathways by completing the "[Career Pathways for Me](#)" activity using [AgCareers.com](#).

Option 2: College and Trade School Exploration

[Click here to access the written plan that you may leave for your substitute.](#) ([Click here for the Google Docs version.](#))

You may edit this plan to fit the needs of your classroom and students.

Student Learning Objectives	Materials
After completing these activities, students will ... 1. Explain the pros and cons of attending college/university versus attending a trade school. 2. Examine information about different colleges/universities and trade schools. 3. Identify careers that are the result of a trade school pathway. 4. Identify careers that are the result of a college/university pathway. 5. Create a profile for three colleges or trade schools.	Student Activity Sheets to Print or Post: • Three-Day Substitute Daily Activity Sheet: Option 2 (Word PDF Google Doc) • Trade School or College: Which Is the Best Path for You? FFA New Horizons Article • Trade School or College: Which Is the Best Path for You? Student Activity Sheet • College Search Student Activity Sheet • College Profile Student Activity Sheet (three copies per student) Other Materials Needed: • Student devices with internet access
Vocabulary Terms	
1. Admissions 2. Certification 3. College 4. Degree 5. Major 6. Trade School 7. Tuition 8. Undergraduate 9. University	
Day-to-Day Plans	
Day 1: (50 minutes) 1. Bell Ringer: (Students will answer the following prompt on their Daily Activity Sheets.) In your own words, what is the difference between a trade school and a college? Is one better than the other? Why or why not? 2. Activity: Students will read the article “Trade School or College: Which Is the Best Path for You?” from the summer edition of <i>FFA New Horizons</i> and complete the following parts of the student activity sheet. a. Part 1: Answer questions based on the article. b. Part 2: Use AgExplorer to choose one career from a college education pathway and one from a trade school pathway and create a job posting for each. c. Part 3: Create a map of colleges and trade schools in their home state. 3. Exit Ticket: (Students will answer the following prompt on their Daily Activity Sheets.) Which educational path do you believe is best for you? List three reasons for your choice.	
Day 2: (50 minutes) 1. Bell Ringer: (Students will answer the following prompt on their Daily Activity Sheets.) After high school, would you prefer to stay in-state or go out-of-state for your education? Why? 2. Activity: For the “College Search” activity, students will identify a career on AgExplorer that they are interested in and find schools that would offer a path toward that career. (Students may modify this activity to better fit trade schools if that is their chosen path.) a. Instead of student life/housing, they can write information about different partners/employers the trade school works with. b. Instead of listing agriculture degrees, they can list certifications offered. 3. Exit Ticket: (Students will answer the following prompt on their Daily Activity Sheets.) There are many different options when it comes to colleges and trade schools. What is most important to you when selecting a school to continue your education? List three things.	

Day 3: (50 minutes)

1. **Bell Ringer:** (Students will answer the following prompt on their Daily Activity Sheets.)
How do you most like to compare different options when you are making a choice (like the choice of which college/school to attend)?
2. **Activity:** Students will draw upon their research from the previous activities and choose three educational institutions (colleges/universities or trade schools) to prepare a profile for. They will do so using the "[College Profile](#)" Student Activity Sheets.
(Students may modify these to better fit trade schools if they so choose.)
 - a. Instead of degree name, they can write the certification earned.
 - b. Instead of the mascot, they can draw the logo.
 - c. Instead of housing costs, they can list costs of any additional materials/equipment needed.
3. **Exit Ticket:** (Students will answer the following prompt on their Daily Activity Sheets.)
You have now done a lot of research into different educational options. In two or three sentences, explain what you believe your next steps should be to work toward your educational goals.
 - a. Additionally, students will complete the "Top Five Things I Learned This Week" section of their Daily Activity Sheets.

Potential Extension Activities

- Have students watch the video "[College and Career Readiness Q&A with Bayer and Express](#)" and complete the [accompanying worksheet](#).
- Students may begin putting together their resumes for applying to higher education using the [FFA Resume Generator](#). **Note: This requires an FFA ID/login, which students will need to have prior to using this tool.*

Five-Day Plans:

Below are two options for cohesive plans that would work to leave for your students when you will be away from your classroom for five consecutive days. Each plan contains activities that connect well to each other as well as a sheet with daily introductory and closure activities/questions (bell work and exit tickets) to further connect the activities and concepts to each other. Each plan also includes the student learning objectives, a list of materials to print or post to your school's learning management system and ideas for extension activities.

Option 1: Agricultural Careers: Becoming the Expert

[Click here to access the written plan that you may leave for your substitute.](#) ([Click here for the Google Docs version.](#))

You may edit this plan to fit the needs of your classroom and students.

Student Learning Objectives	Materials
After completing these activities, students will ... 1. Identify agricultural careers that best match their interests by completing an assessment. 2. Investigate agricultural careers. 3. Discover the breadth and depth of careers in agriculture. 4. Analyze career information in the twelve career focus areas. 5. Create a paper slide video featuring an agricultural career. 6. Research and recommend agricultural careers based on given criteria. 7. Evaluate what aspects of a future career are important to them.	Student Activity Sheets to Print or Post: • Five-Day Substitute Daily Activity Sheet: Option 1 (Word PDF Google Doc) • MyCareer Quiz: Matching My Interests Student Activity Sheet • Discover Careers in Agriculture Student Activity Sheet • Battle of the Best Agriculture Careers Student Activity Sheet • The Agriculture Career Matchmaker Student Activity Sheet (three copies of Part 3 per student) Other Materials Needed: • Student devices with internet access • Student devices with video recording ability
Vocabulary Terms	
1. Career 2. Career Pathway 3. Education/Training 4. Employer 5. Interest 6. Outlook 7. Salary 8. Skill	
Day-to-Day Plans	
Day 1: (50 minutes) 1. Bell Ringer: (Students will answer the following prompt on their Daily Activity Sheets.) When you think about your future career, what are the top three most important characteristics you are looking for? Why? 2. Activity: Students will access the MyCareer Quiz on AgExplorer and answer all the multiple-choice questions to receive their results. They will then complete the "MyCareer Quiz: Matching My Interests" activity, answering the questions about their results. Additionally, have students answer the following reflection questions about their quiz on the back of their papers: a. Were you surprised by your MyCareer Quiz results? Why or why not? b. What were four of the additional careers you matched with (outside of your top four)? Did any of these interest you? Why or why not? c. As you were taking the quiz, what kinds of questions did you think were most important to you in revealing your best career matches? Why? d. Could any of the careers you matched with also exist outside of agriculture? If so, which ones?	

3. **Exit Ticket:** (Students will answer the following prompt on their Daily Activity Sheets.)
What was your overall impression of your MyCareer Quiz results? Could you see yourself working in any of these careers? Why or why not?

Day 2: (50 minutes)

1. **Bell Ringer:** (Students will answer the following prompt on their Daily Activity Sheets.)
What were your top four careers from the MyCareer Quiz you took? If you had to eliminate one of these careers from consideration, which would it be? Why?
2. **Activity:** Students will choose their top three out of the four careers they received from the MyCareer Quiz and use AgExplorer to research them and complete the "[Discover Careers in Agriculture](#)" student activity sheet.
3. **Activity:** Students will now broaden their career searches by completing Part 1 of "[Battle of the Best Agriculture Careers](#)." They will fill out the bracket with one career from each AgExplorer focus area and narrow their choices down to the "best" career in their opinion.
4. **Exit Ticket:** (Students will answer the following prompt on their Daily Activity Sheets.)
What was your "best" career from "Battle of the Best Agriculture Careers" activity? In one sentence, why did you pick this career?

Day 3: (50 minutes)

1. **Bell Ringer:** (Students will answer the following prompt on their Daily Activity Sheets.)
Did your top career from "Battle of the Best Agriculture Careers" match any of your top results from the MyCareer Quiz? Why do you think that was the case?
2. **Activity:** Students will complete Parts 2 and 3 of "[Battle of the Best Agriculture Careers](#)."
 - a. Part 2: Students will write two paragraphs explaining their reasoning for picking their "best" career.
 - b. Part 3: Students will create a paper slideshow all about their winning career. They will create their slides, write out their narrations and record a 45 to 90-second video of their slideshow. Students can then share these videos with each other to watch.
3. **Exit Ticket:** (Students will answer the following prompt on their Daily Activity Sheets.)
How was your slideshow similar to those of your classmates? How were they different? Did anyone else have your same top career?

Day 4: (50 minutes)

1. **Bell Ringer:** (Students will answer the following prompt on their Daily Activity Sheets.)
What is the most valuable thing you have learned about agricultural careers so far?
2. **Activity:** Students will now take on the role of an agricultural career expert in "[The Agriculture Career Matchmaker](#)."
 - a. Part 1: Students will read four profiles of individuals who are looking for career help. They will use [AgExplorer](#) to find careers they believe would match well with each individual based on the information in their profiles and then answer the additional questions for each person.
 - b. Part 2: Students will consider what characteristics they themselves are looking for in a future career. They will complete a short survey that asks them about themselves in a variety of ways and also challenges them to list their top five characteristics for a future career.
3. **Exit Ticket:** (Students will answer the following prompt on their Daily Activity Sheets.)
How did you feel playing the "career expert"? How would you rate each of your matches? Why did you rate them the way you did?

Day 5: (50 minutes)

1. **Bell Ringer:** (Students will answer the following prompt on their Daily Activity Sheets.)
Do you think it is helpful to have an outside perspective when selecting a career? Why or why not?
2. **Activity:** Students will complete Part 3 of "[The Agriculture Career Matchmaker](#)" three times (with three different classmates).

- a. Students will pair up and share their profiles from Part 2 with a classmate and come up with questions to ask their classmates. They will then use their classmates' profiles and interview answers along with [AgExplorer](#) to select a career for their classmates and provide reasoning for why they selected that career. Classmates will then share with each other and record their results.
 - b. Students will repeat this process until they have recommendations from three different classmates.
3. **Exit Ticket:** (Students will answer the following prompt on their Daily Activity Sheets.)
Did your classmates' career selections for you align with either your MyCareer Quiz results or your top career from "Battle of the Best Agriculture Careers"? In three or four sentences, explain why you think this was the case.
 - a. Additionally, students will complete the "Top Five Things I Learned This Week" section of their Daily Activity Sheets.

Potential Extension Activities

- Have students take the careers their classmates recommended and either complete another copy of "[Discover Careers in Agriculture](#)" or complete a [Career Profile](#) sheet for each of the careers.
- Have students expand their short paper slideshow from "Battle of the Best Agriculture Careers" into a full presentation or three- to five-minute video to profile their careers.

Option 2: Preparing a Resume

[Click here to access the written plan that you may leave for your substitute.](#) ([Click here for the Google Docs version.](#))

You may edit this plan to fit the needs of your classroom and students.

Student Learning Objectives	Materials
After completing these activities, students will ... 1. Identify and define the components of a resume. 2. Understand the importance and use of a resume when applying for jobs. 3. Brainstorm experiences they have that could contribute to their resumes. 4. Identify qualities of a resume that are relevant to a specific job posting. 5. Compare and contrast two resumes to determine the level of quality. 6. Determine the qualities of a resume that best showcase an applicant. 7. Construct their own resumes for an example job using their real experiences. 8. Practice professional communication in the job application process.	Student Activity Sheets to Print or Post: • Five-Day Substitute Daily Activity Sheet: Option 2 (Word PDF Google Doc) • Craft the Perfect Digital Resume FFA New Horizons Article • Craft the Perfect Digital Resume Student Activity Sheet • You're the Boss Student Activity Sheets • Submitting a Resume Student Activity Sheets Other Materials Needed: • Student devices with internet access • Blank paper • Scissors • Glue • Word processing software with resume templates (Microsoft Word, Google Docs, etc. OR the FFA Resume Generator)
Vocabulary Terms	
1. Certification 2. Cover Letter 3. Job Application 4. Job Posting 5. Objective 6. Professional Reference 7. Resume 8. Skills 9. Work Experience	
Day-to-Day Plans	
Day 1: (50 minutes) 1. Bell Ringer: (Students will answer the following prompt on their Daily Activity Sheets.) Do you have a resume already? Why or why not? 2. Activity: Students will read the article "Craft the Perfect Digital Resume" from the Fall/Winter 2021 edition of <i>FFA New Horizons</i> and complete the following parts of the student activity sheet. a. Part 1: Students will answer questions based on the article they read. b. Part 2: Students will cut out the resume heading and definition/purpose strips and match them up correctly before gluing them onto a blank sheet of paper. (Key available at the end of this document.) 3. Exit Ticket: (Students will answer the following prompt on their Daily Activity Sheets.) Pick three headings of a typical resume and explain why each is important to include on your resume.	
Day 2: (50 minutes) 1. Bell Ringer: (Students will answer the following prompt on their Daily Activity Sheets.) Why is it important to start keeping a resume while you are in school? 2. Activity: Students will complete the following parts of the "Craft the Perfect Digital Resume" student activity sheet. a. Part 3: Students will choose one of three jobs listed on the top of the sheet to apply for and brainstorm experiences they have for each category for their resumes. b. Part 4: Students will use the worksheet to begin outlining the information to include within each section of their resume as well as think of professional references and write a practice	

communication asking an individual to serve as one of their references.

3. **Exit Ticket:** (Students will answer the following prompt on their Daily Activity Sheets.)
Why is it valuable to have individuals ready to serve as references when you are conducting a job search?
What kinds of people should you ask to be your references?

Day 3: (50 minutes)

1. **Bell Ringer:** (Students will answer the following prompt on their Daily Activity Sheets.)
What do you think are the top three qualities hiring managers are looking for when reviewing the resumes of job applicants? Why?
2. **Activity:** For the activity "[You're The Boss](#)," students will act as a hiring manager in a given scenario with an established job posting and will first determine what qualities they are looking for in job applicants. They will then review two resumes for the job and follow the provided rubric to evaluate the resumes. Finally, they will write a recommendation to their supervisor for whom to hire for the position and answer related questions.
3. **Exit Ticket:** (Students will answer the following prompt on their Daily Activity Sheets.)
How does having been on the hiring side of looking at resumes impact your process for creating your own?

Day 4: (50 minutes)

1. **Bell Ringer:** (Students will answer the following prompt on their Daily Activity Sheets.)
What ideas do you have to make your resume stand out above others when hiring managers are looking at them?
2. **Activity:** Have students create their own resumes using the resources they have collected so far. You can choose to have students use the [FFA Resume Generator](#)* or choose a template from a word-processing software. Students should take the information from the earlier activities and create entries on their resume with it.
**Note: The FFA Resume Generator requires an FFA ID/login, which students will need to have access to prior to using this tool.*
3. **Exit Ticket:** (Students will answer the following prompt on their Daily Activity Sheets.)
What is one strength you believe your resume has? What is one weakness you believe it still has? How can you fix this weakness?

Day 5: (50 minutes)

1. **Bell Ringer:** (Students will answer the following prompt on their Daily Activity Sheets.)
What do you think is the most effective way to share your resume with potential employers? Explain your answer in one or two sentences.
2. **Activity:** Students will follow the directions on the "[Submitting a Resume](#)" [student activity sheet](#) to find a real job posting that mirrors the job they selected at the beginning of their resume process. They will then answer all of the questions regarding the company/hiring manager's information and finally draft an example email to submit their resume as well as an example follow-up email after they've submitted their resume. (Note: They will not actually send these emails.)
3. **Exit Ticket:** (Students will answer the following prompt on their Daily Activity Sheets.)
What has been the most beneficial or eye-opening part of the resume-building process for you? Explain your answer in three or four sentences.
 - a. Additionally, students will complete the "Top Five Things I Learned This Week" section of their Daily Activity Sheets.

Potential Extension Activities

- Have students peer review each other's resumes and offer feedback for improvement.
- Have students engage in the cover letter-writing process using the "[Cover Letter: Can Less Be More](#)" and "[Cover Letter Polishing](#)" activities.