FINANCIAL LITERACY

LESSON 11-27 ▲ THE LABOR MARKET

**LEARNING GOALS/OUTCOMES**

* Learn about the influence of supply and demand on job availability.
* Describe the influence of supply and demand on job availability and wage.
* Identify present-day high demand jobs in the workplace.
* Analyze the effect of job availability on present-day postsecondary/career plans.

**MATERIALS NEEDED**

* **Student Handouts:**
* High Growth Occupations
* Journal Page

**CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES**

1. **Students discuss the local job market for teenagers.** Ask students to call out the types of jobs they have held in the local job market. They may have been babysitters, or mowed lawns, worked at a fast food restaurant, or worked as a counselor at a summer camp. Write their jobs on the board. Each time the same type of job comes up, make a tally mark next to that word. Look over your list and ask students if they can tell what types of jobs are most available in the local labor market for teens. Ask if this list gives them any ideas for finding weekend or summer jobs. You might note that they will probably have more luck going after jobs that are in plentiful supply.
2. **Students discuss how job-seekers find jobs.** Ask students how they would find information about job openings if they wanted to get a job. Write their answers on the board. Students might answer that they would look for jobs on Craigslist or job search sites, ask friends, or call businesses where they are interested in working. Ask students if they have used any of these sources before and put tally marks next to each idea when a student indicates she or he has actually done that to find a job.
3. **Students examine the influence of supply and demand on a market**. Divide students into groups of three. Ask them to imagine they are each the owner of a store that sells one letter of the alphabet. What letter would they choose to sell? Have each group decide on one letter to sell at their store and ask them to write that letter on three different pieces of paper. This is the supply of

Ask one student in each group to stay in their “store” with their “supply” of three copies of one letter. Ask all the other students stand in the center of the class. Tell those students that they are the purchasers of letters, also known as the “demand.” They each have $10 to spend for this activity, and they must purchase the letter that is the first letter of their first name. Ask students to move to the store that has the letter they need. If there is no supply of that letter, they must stay in the middle of the classroom.

For letters in which there is more demand than supply, the owner of the store can set any price they want for their letters. Let students offer to buy these letters in alphabetical order of last name. For letters in which there is more supply than demand for letters, tell the owner of the store that they can set any price they want. After all the letters that can be sold are purchased, ask students to return to their seats.

Ask the class what the value of “high demand/low supply” is. They should conclude that it gives the supplier the upper hand: the store owner can get more for their supply and have a steady flow of letter sales. Ask the class what happens in a market when there is “low demand/high supply.” They should conclude that the purchasers (or “demand” side) have the upper hand: they can get their letters for much less cost. Tell students that an understanding of supply and demand can really help them when choosing a career path. They represent the “supply” in any career market.
4. **Students examine the influence of supply and demand on job availability and wage.** Ask students to return to their group’s “store.” Tell them they are now merely a discussion group. Explain that it is easiest to get a job if many different businesses and organizations need that type of skill (“high demand”). It is even easier if there are not many people who have the skills or qualifications to do the job (“low supply”). Ask each group to brainstorm the types of jobs they think will be in high demand/low supply in the United States over the next decade. Call students together after several minutes and compare lists. How are their lists similar and different? What types of jobs do your students think will be in high demand? Why?
5. **Students identify present-day high demand jobs in the workplace.** With students still in their small groups, distribute the *High Growth Occupations*. This handout lists careers that the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics has identified as being high growth between now and 2016. Ask students to compare the careers on the handout with the careers on their brainstorm list. Have them circle the similar careers. Then have them create a list of the different types of skills and/or post-secondary credentials that will be most in demand. Discuss students’ lists.
6. **Students analyze the effect of job availability on present-day post-secondary/career plans.** Ask students for a show of hands: how many are interested in one of the career fields listed on the handout? Make note of the careers that interest students. Ask students to explain why they are interested in a particular career: is it because of personal interest or because the career is in a high demand area? Discuss why students might want to consider job availability as they plan for the future.

Caution students about job predictions: it is not an exact science. During the 1970s, when Bill Gates and Steve Jobs were both in high school, no one could have predicted that personal computers would be a big job area… because there were no personal computers! Discuss the importance of students balancing their own interests, values, and skills with job availability as they make post-secondary plans.
7. **Students consider the value of pursuing high interest careers with uncertain futures.** Ask each student to write responses to the following questions on a *Journal Page.*
* Choose three careers that interest you and are not on the High Growth Occupations list. If these careers proved to be high supply/low demand careers, would you still pursue them? Why or why not?
* In your opinion, what is the more important consideration: your level of interest in a career or the supply and demand of that career field?

**STUDENT PRODUCTS**

* **Completed *Journal Page*** on how supply and demand influences personal goals

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LESSON 11-27 STUDENT HANDOUT

 HIGH GROWTH OCCUPATIONS

As you think about careers, you will want to consider whether there will be a job available for you. Here is a list of the occupations projected to have the fastest growth between now and 2016. Are you interested in any of these careers?

**Occupations with the Fastest Growth**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Occupations** | **Percent Change** | **Number of new jobs *(thousands)*** | **Wages *(May 2008 median)*** | **Education / training category** |
| **Biomedical engineers** | 72 | 11.6 | $77,400 | Bachelor’s degree |
| **Network systems and data communications analysts** | 53 | 155.8 | $71,100 | Bachelor’s degree |
| **Home health aides** | 50 | 460.9 | $20,460 | Short-term on-the-job training |
| **Personal and home care aides** | 46 | 375.8 | $19,180 | Short-term on-the-job training |
| **Financial examiners** | 41 | 11.1 | $70,930 | Bachelor’s degree |
| **Medical scientists, except epidemiologists** | 40 | 44.2 | $72,590 | Doctoral degree |
| **Physician assistants** | 39 | 29.2 | $81,230 | Master’s degree |
| **Skin care specialists** | 38 | 14.7 | $28,730 | Post-secondary vocational award |
| **Biochemists and biophysicists** | 37 | 8.7 | $82,840 | Doctoral degree |
| **Athletic trainers** | 37 | 6.0 | $39,640 | Bachelor’s degree |
| **Physical therapist aides** | 36 | 16.7 | $23,760 | Short term on-the-job training |
| **Dental hygienists** | 36 | 62.9 | $66,570 | Associate degree |
| **Veterinary technologists and technicians** | 36 | 28.5 | $28,900 | Associate degree |
| **Dental assistants** | 36 | 105.6 | $32,380 | Moderate on-the-job training |
| **Computer software engineers, applications** | 34 | 175.1 | $85,430 | Bachelor’s degree |
| **Medical assistants** | 34 | 163.9 | $28,300 | Moderate on-the-job training |
| **Physical therapist assistants** | 33 | 21.2 | $46,140 | Associate degree |
| **Veterinarians** | 33 | 19.7 | $79,050 | First professional degree |
| **Self-enrichment education teachers** | 32 | 81.3 | $35,720 | Work experience in related occupation |
| **Compliance officers, except agriculture, construction, health and safety, and transportation** | 31 | 80.8 | $48,890 | Long-term on-the-job training |

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 JOURNAL PAGE

**DATE:**

**Lesson 11-27 | *THE LABOR MARKET***

***Q1:*** Choose three careers that interest you and are not on the High Growth Occupation list. If these careers proved to be high supply/low demand careers, would you still pursue them? Why or why not?

***Q2:*** In your opinion, what is the more important consideration: your level of interest in a career or the supple and demand of that career field?

***Answers:***