



Length of Session: 50 minutes

Year Group: Year 10

Materials Needed: Flipchart paper, 2 x Handouts on options, Additional Handouts on Training, Marker pens, Bluetack, Option Cards.

Aims and Objectives

- To make pupils aware of the main options available to them when they leave school.
- To get pupils to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each option.
- To help the pupils to decide which route may be more appropriate to them.
- To answer any questions on Options at 16+.

Introduction (5 minutes)

Introduce Self and role within the Connexions Service.

Explain the aims and objectives of the session (as above).

Main Part (30 minutes)

Handout the general Options at 16+ leaflet (not the advantages/disadvantages leaflet).

Explain what the main options are i.e.:-

1. Further Education
2. Apprenticeships (including Apprenticeships, Advanced Apprenticeships and Entry to Employment (e2e))
3. Employment
4. Unemployment.

Briefly discuss each option. Explain that 'Unemployment' is not a viable option for most young people but that we will still cover it (it is hoped that the group discussing it will come up with a lot of disadvantages!).

Divide the class into four groups.

Ask each pupil to pick one of these options (or give each group an option each to discuss).

NB: You may wish to give the group discussing Apprenticeships and the Entry to Employment (e2e) information as well.

Ask each group to read their handout and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of this option. Tell the class they will have approximately 10 minutes to discuss this.

Options at 16+

Go round the groups to answer questions.

Then ask each group to put their results on the flipchart paper in any form they wish i.e. pictures, writing, etc. Stick the finished posters on the wall.

Conclusion / Feedback (15 minutes)

Read through each poster and expand on the findings of each group or if you have time ask a representative from each group to explain their poster (you could compare their findings to the points on the Advantages / Disadvantages handout).

Ask if the pupils have any questions about these options. Give each pupil the Options at 16+ Advantages / Disadvantages handout.

Thank class for their hard work.

Options at 16+

Full-Time Education (College)

Advantages	Disadvantages
There are a wide range of courses and qualifications available - can now study a wider range of subjects at level 3 (A/AS level)	May not have much money! Parents/guardians can still claim Child Benefit and you may be able to claim up to £30 per week through an Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)
Can progress onto Higher Education i.e. to do a degree/diploma	Don't have much contact with employers
Career prospects will be enhanced	Will have to do homework i.e. assignments, essays, etc
Treated as an adult, feel more independent!	There are exams in some courses

Training (including Apprenticeships, Advanced Apprenticeships and Entry to Employment (e2e))

Advantages	Disadvantages
Gain practical experience of a specific job area as training is work-based with an employer	There is some written work to do and you will have to put together a 'portfolio of evidence' to prove you can do the job.
Get to network with employers and make important contacts which may help you find work in the future	Although approximately 80% of trainees who complete their training find employment, there is still no guarantee of a job afterwards.
Minimum of wage £80 per week for Employed Apprenticeship (NVQ Level 2) and Advanced Apprenticeships (NVQ Level 3). E2E and Non-employed Apprenticeships (up to and including NVQ Level 2), young people can try to claim EMA.	£80 per week may seem a low 'wage' for a 30-40 hour week
If on a Apprenticeship or E2E Program the aim is that you will employed by the company.	Training programmes are very specific and it can be difficult to transfer.
You will gain a NVQ qualification	NVQ's are not usually recognised for entry to Higher Education courses.
Training programmes are available in a wide range of job areas – all school leavers are guaranteed a training place.	Limited availability of popular areas such as motor vehicle, design.

Options at 16+

Employment

Advantages	Disadvantages
Get to earn some money!	Wages paid to 16 year olds tend to be low
Get practical experience with an employer	Often very little job opportunities for school leavers. Tend to be jobs like labouring, cucumber picking, shop work, etc
There may be the chance to progress within the company / take qualifications. All school leavers are now legally entitled to 'time off to study' in order to gain qualifications.	Can be working long, unsocial hours and employer may be reluctant to allow you 'time off to study' even though this is a legal right
Gain independence	Need to consider long term career aims!

Unemployment

Advantages	Disadvantages
Have lots of free time!	No money to do anything in free time. Sixteen year olds usually can't claim any benefits (there are some exceptions).
Could use the time positively ie. voluntary work, take part-time qualifications, caring for a relative, etc.	Isolation, feel like 'the odd one out' as most of your friends will be going to college or have a job/training place.
	Novelty may wear off and can easily get into a 'rut' and get bored.
	Lack of self-esteem/confidence from being out of work.
	Blanks on CV don't look good - can make it harder to find employment in the future.

Options at 16+

Options at 16+ looks at what you can do when you finish Year 11. It gives information on taking further qualifications, following a training programme and finding employment.

What is meant by 'Options at 16+'

When people talk about Options at 16+, they are talking about choices available at the end of compulsory education - that is, the end of Year 11.

Until Year 11, the choices you have made about the future have probably been limited to picking GCSE options. This may have been difficult, or it may have been fairly straightforward. Either way it will have given you some experience of the kind of decisions that will need to be taken before the end of Year 11. These decisions are a lot more complicated than choosing which GCSEs to study. They may involve not only considering different subjects, courses, training or employment, but also being aware of the variety of places offering post 16 options and thinking about different ways of achieving your goals.

Although work, training and college options only become available at the end of Year 11, choices and decisions need to be made much earlier. Left until the last moment, there may not be enough time to properly consider what the options are and the advantages and disadvantages of each. Decisions can be taken quickly, but rushed decisions often turn out to be the wrong ones. Take plenty of time to find out about the alternatives and get the facts on them.

The Options at 16+

There are 3 main options open to you when you leave school. These are:

1. Taking further qualifications at College or 6th Form
2. Going on an Apprenticeship
3. Finding employment

Unemployment may appear to be an option but it is worth remembering that 16 and 17 year olds cannot, as a rule, claim benefit (there are some exceptions).

1. College or 6th Form

Taking further qualifications at college is often called 'continuing in full-time education'. You can continue your education at a further education college or a 6th Form. There are a wide range of qualifications available and they tend to fall into two main categories:

Vocational - these are courses on which students gain knowledge relating to a particular job or area of work. Some involve work experience with an employer. Courses include Health and Social Care, Information Technology, Built Environment, etc. Qualifications include: BTECs (Business and Technology Education Council) and RSA's (Royal Society of Arts), etc.

Academic - these are courses during which students learn about particular subjects eg. English, History, French, Psychology, Sociology, etc. In this way they are similar to GCSEs but the subject matter is more complex and 'in-depth'. Examples are A levels and AS levels.

Options at 16+

If you do not get 4/5 GCSEs at grades A-C it is possible to re-take your GCSEs or you may wish to take a course related to the area of work you are interested in, such as a BTEC First Diploma course.

Continuing in full-time education at 16+ is the most common way to get into higher education, such as degree courses and HNDs (Higher National Diplomas). This is often necessary to get into a professional career, for example, Teaching, Solicitor, Doctor, etc.

If you decide to go to college, you can apply for financial support, for example: Education Maintenance Allowances, College Access Funds and Discretionary Awards.

2. Going on an Apprenticeship

So what is an Apprenticeship ?

An Apprenticeship is work-based learning designed for young people aged 16 – 24. There are two different levels of Apprenticeship available, both lead to National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ's), Key Skills qualifications and, in most cases, a technical certificate such as BTEC. An Apprenticeship will provide hands-on experience, skills and knowledge and the qualifications needed for a chosen career. Apprenticeships are designed with the help of industry employers to ensure relevant training and knowledge is included. Your training will include the necessary skills for your chosen industry, enabling you to perform in your job and increase your prospects at work. Whilst learning these skills for the industry with an employer, you will complete an Apprenticeship framework, which includes customised training with a Work Based Learning (WBL) Provider. This is funded by the Learning and Skills Council. Most training is "on the job" at your employer's premises but some of the training can be carried out "off the job" at your WBL Provider centre or at local College. There are two levels of Apprenticeships: Apprenticeship and Advanced Apprenticeship.

Apprenticeship.

An Apprenticeship (A) consists of an NVQ level 2, relevant key skills and a technical certificate, where appropriate. You will be working for an employer and learning at the same time. Apprenticeships are equivalent to 5 GCSE's grades A-C and lead on to an Advanced Apprenticeship. **On an Apprenticeship the aim is that you will be employed and paid a minimum wage of £80 per week.**

Until you are employed you may be linked to an employer and may be eligible for an Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), conditions may apply. How long you take to complete your Apprenticeship depends on you and the progress you make.

Usually it takes about 12-15 months.

Advanced apprenticeship.

An Advanced Apprenticeship (AA) consists of an NVQ level 3, relevant key skills and a technical certificate. Usually young people on an Advanced Apprenticeship are in a supervisory or technical job role. Advanced Apprenticeships are equivalent to 'A' levels and can lead on to NVQ level 4 or Higher Education, including University. **On an Advanced Apprenticeship you will be employed and paid a minimum wage of £80 per week.** How long it takes you to complete your Advanced Apprenticeship depends on you and the progress you make.

Usually it takes 2-3 years.

Options at 16+

e2e

If you think you are unable, (for whatever reason), to go straight into employment, further education or an Apprenticeship then e2e could be for you. e2e is a programme designed to provide an introduction to employment and learning for young people.

e2e is a programme designed to provide an introduction to employment and learning for young people.

During your initial assessment your Work Based Learning (WBL) Provider will work with you to identify your chosen route. You have one of three choices: Apprenticeship, Employment or Further Education.

An individual programme is then designed to support and guide you through your chosen route, to prepare you for the next stage.

e2e Pre-Apprenticeship.

If you want to go onto an apprenticeship, your programme will be designed to prepare you for this. It will give you opportunities to look at the various jobs you could do and go on workplace tasters. You may also be able to develop your key skills, practical skills and start to work towards an NVQ.

e2e Pre-Employment.

If you want to go into employment, your programme will be designed to prepare you for this, looking at the skills you need in the workplace. You may also be able to go on work tasters. We will help you to search for a job and prepare for interview.

e2e Pre-Further Education.

If you want to go onto Further Education, your programme will be designed to prepare you for this, looking at the skills you will need, such as note taking, study options, budgeting and college visits and tasters.

Whilst on e2e you may be entitled to claim Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), subject to conditions. Speak to your Connexions Personal Adviser or Careers Teacher for more information.

3. Finding employment

Finding a job after GCSEs can be very tempting as it offers the chance to earn some 'real money'. It is worth remembering, however, that what may seem like a good wage now will not be quite as substantial in a few years time. Jobs for school leavers are very difficult to get and low pay is very common. In fact, many jobs do not pay much more than training programmes.

Entering a job where there is no training means that you are unlikely to progress in a career and increase your earnings. All school leavers now have a legal 'right to time off for study'. Therefore, if you enter a job with no training and you wish to take further qualifications at a college/training centre, your employer must allow you to do this. It makes sense to look for a job that provides structured good quality training.

The Connexions Service advertises jobs for 16-plus year olds and Personal Advisers are available to give you advice and help to look for a job. The Connexions Service can help you do a Curriculum Vitae (CV), can help you complete application forms, arrange interviews, etc. Jobs are also advertised in local papers and Job Centres.

Students often consider part-time, evening, weekend and holiday jobs to gain valuable experience, enhance their CV and to earn money. Colleges usually encourage their students to find work **but** for no more than 8 hours per week.