

Parents struggle to keep up with children's career options

Level 2: Intermediate

1 Warmer

a. Which of these jobs is most important for society? Put them in order from 1 (most important) to 6 (least important).

- web designer
- environmental scientist
- dietary consultant
- astronaut
- urban planner
- virologist

2 Key words

a. Find the following words in the text. The paragraph numbers are given to help you.

1. a noun meaning *a product or group of products that has its own name and is made by one particular company* _____ (1)
2. a noun meaning *the possibility to develop or achieve something in the future* _____ (2)
3. an adjective meaning *worried* _____ (5)
4. a noun meaning *a job or activity that you are good at and that is very suitable for you* _____ (6)
5. a noun meaning *a person who broadcasts himself or herself online through a live stream or a video they have recorded* _____ (7)
6. a noun meaning *money that you earn to live on* _____ (7)
7. a noun meaning *an expert or professional person whose job is to give help and advice on a particular subject* _____ (8)
8. a noun meaning *money given to an organization* _____ (9)
9. a noun meaning *a set of rules that a computer uses to solve problems or do calculations* _____ (10)
10. an adjective meaning *theoretical* _____ (11)

'How is that a real job?' Parents struggle to keep up with children's career options

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Amelia Hill

19 May, 2022

- 1 When Leon Martin asked for his parents' advice on how to become a UX designer, they were confused. "I didn't know what he was talking about," said Anne, his mother. "I didn't know whether he was talking about designing clothes, computer programs or a new brand of mountain bike."
- 2 Even when 18-year-old Leon explained that the job was connected with online design, his mother was still confused. "I felt like I'd totally failed as a parent," she said. "My job as a parent is to help my children to achieve their potential, but how can I do that when I don't even understand what their ambitions are?"
- 3 Anne isn't alone. Research has found that more than two-thirds of parents of 11- to 18-year-olds in England are lost when their children express interest in careers they know nothing about.
- 4 The situation isn't helped by the number of new career and education options available to young people. More than 75% of parents felt that giving career advice to their children was almost impossible in such a fast-changing jobs market.
- 5 Michelle Rea, from Talking Futures, which carried out the survey of more than 2,000 parents of secondary-school pupils in England, said parents were concerned that their lack of knowledge could make talking about careers difficult. "Things have changed since most of us were at school."
- 6 Bryony Mathew, a neuroscientist, said the world was changing so rapidly that parents should not try to identify specific careers for their children. "Children in primary school today will one day have careers that don't yet exist," she said. "This means that parents should be encouraging their children to learn a wide mixture of art, science and computing, so that they can find or create their own niches. Parents can't possibly teach a child what their niche is in such a fast-moving world; it's something the young person has to discover themselves."
- 7 Shamajul Motin, an educational consultant, said parents did not understand their children's career choices. "For example, we have loads of young people who want to be streamers, and the parents say: 'How is that a real job when all they do is play computer games all day? How are they going to make a living out of that?'" he said. "But the parent doesn't realize that the child can actually make a lot of money from doing exactly that. The world of work has changed and it's taking parents time to realize that."

Futuristic careers

8 UX designer

User experience design is the creation of evidence-based designs for products or websites. Decisions in UX design are made based on research, data analysis and test results. Senior UX designers and consultants can earn £65,000 a year or more.

9 Twitch streamer

Live streaming technology lets you watch, create and share videos in real time. A streamer plays video games live for an audience, speaking to viewers on microphone and camera. Streamers make money through viewer donations and advertising. An expert streamer can make up to £350,000 a year.

10 Machine learning engineer

A type of artificial intelligence that uses big data to create complex algorithms to programme a machine (such as a self-driving car or digital voice assistant) to carry out tasks like a human. The average salary for a machine learning engineer in the UK is £52,000.

11 Asteroid miner

Asteroids and minor planets contain important materials such as gold, silver and platinum. Asteroid mining is the hypothetical extraction and transportation of these minerals back to Earth. A job of the future ...

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3 Comprehension check

a. Are these statements True (T) or False (F) according to the article? Correct any that are false.

1. Leon Martin asked his parents for advice about becoming an UX designer.
2. Leon explained to his mother that he was talking about designing clothes.
3. According to research, almost two-thirds of parents of 11- to 18-year-olds know nothing about the careers their children are interested in.
4. The survey questioned more than 2,000 parents of primary-school pupils in England.
5. According to Bryony Matthew, parents should encourage their children to focus on computing.
6. Streamers can earn a living out of playing computer games.
7. Senior UX designers and consultants can earn at least £65,000 a year.
8. Streamers earn money from advertising.
9. Machine learning engineers earn more than expert streamers.
10. Asteroid mining started five years ago.

4 Key language

a. Complete the phrases from the text using these prepositions.

on to up to in out of of

1. career options available _____ young people
2. express interest _____ a career
3. make a living _____ computer games
4. UX design is based _____ research
5. the world _____ work
6. make _____ £350,000 a year

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5 Discussion

a. Discuss these statements.

- "In the future, leisure will be more important than work."
- "Computer jobs are not real jobs."

6 In your own words

- a. Choose one of the four futuristic jobs mentioned in paragraphs 8 to 11 of the article. Use an internet search engine to find out as much as possible about this job.
- b. Report your findings to the class.