

# Career Exploration for the ESOL Classroom

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## Architecture and Construction: Construction Trades



**Student Workbook**

Institute for the Professional Development of Adult Educators

CAREER EXPLORATION FOR THE ESOL CLASSROOM

## Architecture and Construction: Construction Trades

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Rod Duckworth, Chancellor  
Career and Adult Education, Department of Education

Zelda Rogers, Senior Educational Program Director  
Adult Education, Career and Adult Education

Philip Anderson, ESOL Program Specialist  
Adult Education, Career and Adult Education

June Rall, Director of IPDAE  
Tamara Serrano, Project Support Specialist for IPDAE

Developers  
Bonnie Goonen  
Susan Pittman



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Institute for the Professional Development of Adult Educators  
3209 Virginia Avenue - Fort Pierce, FL 34981  
Phone 772-462-7409 • E-mail [info@floridaipdae.org](mailto:info@floridaipdae.org)

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## Introduction to the Construction Industry – Leo, Maria, Emilio, Justin, Rea

### Scenario

Leo, Maria, Emilio, Justin, and Rea sat drinking coffee at their neighborhood restaurant.

“Did you see the article about the job fair?” asked Leo. “There’s a new center being built. There are over 10,000 jobs to be filled. They want plumbers, carpenters, masons, heating-air conditioning workers, and construction workers.”

“That sounds really interesting,” said Emilio. “My uncle works in construction. He makes a good living for his family. But, we don’t have our licenses.”

“That’s the exciting part,” shared Leo. “They are also hiring people with no skills. They’re paying \$15.21 an hour. We are all very hard workers. We have all talked about how much building is happening. There aren’t enough workers. That is why they’re going to have a job fair. People from the different trades will also be there.

“My aunt is an electrician,” said Maria. “Maybe she could help.”

“Your aunt is an electrician!” Justin exclaimed.

### Vocabulary

- Apprenticeship
- Career
- Construction
- Job Fair
- Experience
- License
- Trade

“Yes, she was the first woman electrician in our town.” said Maria. “She entered an apprenticeship program and got her license. She is really good at her job. She now has her own business.”

“Have you ever been to a job fair?” asked Rea.

“No,” said Leo. “It does sound like a great time to learn about construction careers. There will be people who talk about their careers. We can learn about the schooling and licenses. They even have apprenticeship programs.”

Rea smiled, “We can also go to the hiring booths. We could apply for a new job and get started on a new career. Both at the same time!”

## **What Do You Think?**

1. Why do you think that attending the job fair will help the group in starting a new career?
2. Have you ever attended a job or career fair? What did you learn?
3. Why do you think Justin was surprised that Maria’s aunt was an electrician?
4. Are construction careers a good choice for females? Why or why not?
5. If you were part of the group, would you apply for a job at the job fair? Why or why not?

## So Many Careers – Leo, Maria, Emilio, Justin, Rea

### Scenario

The group met for their coffee break on Friday. They were excited about the job fair. They had spent a whole day visiting the different booths. There were so many different careers.

Rea talked about the Carpenters' Association. She knew that she had skills in carpentry. She shared with the group that she wanted to learn more about the on-the-job training programs.

Justin shared that he wanted to talk to the local Electrician's Union. "They have an apprenticeship program," he said. "I can make money while I'm learning. Once I get my license, I can open my own business. I really like the idea of being an apprentice."

"My uncle is a mason." Leo shared. "I could work with him and learn the trade. But, I really liked learning about heavy construction, too. I would get to operate the machines and put up buildings. I know that I would be good at that."

Maria looked at Leo. "You know, I really liked construction too. Putting up buildings sounds so exciting."

"I am trying to picture you in a hard hat." Rea said. "I do know that you will be good at whatever career path you choose. I can see you in a non-traditional career."

### Vocabulary

- Apprentice
- Association
- Booths
- Career pathway
- Hard hat
- Non-traditional career

Emilio was so pleased that the group had found a career pathway. They all seemed so excited.

“Emilio,” Rea said, “We haven’t heard from you.”

“I really liked the different types of careers,” said Emilio. “There was so much more than I thought there would be. I just don’t know what I would be good at yet. If I am going to start a new career, I want to make sure that I am a success. Also, I want to make sure that there are jobs that pay well. The new jobs at the center are only for one to three years. I want to make sure that my new career has jobs for many years. Also, I want a job where I can go up the career ladder. Maybe, I need to spend more time researching.”

### **What Do You Think?**

1. What do you think of the group’s decisions on a construction career? Do you think they are making good decisions?
2. Why is it important to know how much a career pays and whether or not there are job openings?
3. Why do you think that Emilio says that he needs to “spend more time researching”?
4. Have you ever started a new career? Why did you choose the career?

## Different Paths – Emilio

### Scenario

Emilio wasn't sure what he wanted to do. At the job fair, he had talked to so many people. He got a lot of advice and information about different opportunities. There was electrical, plumbing, building maintenance, painting, and even flooring. The list seemed to go on and on. Emilio had spent hours reading the different brochures.

His friends seemed so sure about their new careers. Justin had applied to be an electrical apprentice. Justin said that he needed to pass some entry tests. So, he was working on his math skills at the local adult education center. Justin hoped that he would pass the math test next month. Then he could start his electrical apprenticeship program.

Maria was working with her aunt. She was looking at different schools and on-the-job training programs. Maria knew she wanted to be a supervisor. Her aunt was helping her decide on the best program to get her started.

Rea was already working with a carpentry company. She was learning to make cabinets. Rea told Emilio how much she enjoyed her new job. Plus, she was getting to use her talent.

Leo was really lucky. He got a job in construction at the new center. He was learning how to pour cement and lay block. It was an entry-level job, but it was a great beginning for him.

Emilio knew that starting a new career was a big decision. There were just too many questions. He wasn't sure what his next step should be.

### Vocabulary

- Advice
- Career inventory
- Entry tests
- Entry-level job
- Opportunities



Emilio was sure that a career in construction trades was what he wanted. It was just the first step.

Maria had talked with a career counselor at the local technical center. She had taken a career inventory. It told her what her interests and strengths were. That was how she decided that she wanted to be a construction supervisor. Maybe that was what he should do. Then he would know for sure what skills and education he needed to get started.

### **What Do You Think?**

1. What different paths did Justin, Maria, Rea, and Leo take to enter a career in construction trades? What path would you take? Why?
2. Was it a good decision for Justin to attend an adult education center to improve his math skills? Why or why not?
3. Have you ever taken a career inventory? If so, what information did it give you?
4. Why do you think that Emilio is having a hard time making a decision about a career?
5. What do you think Emilio's next step should be? Why?

## Glossary

**Advice:** *noun* – help or assistance given to someone.

**Apprentice:** *noun* – a person who works with a professional instead of going to school.

**Apprenticeship:** *noun* – training program where a person works for another person or company in order to learn a trade. Apprentices are paid a portion of the wage they would make if fully certified for that profession, such as an electrician or plumber.

**Association:** *noun* – a professional organization, such as the Plumber’s Association.

**Booth:** *noun* – a small temporary enclosure, such as a booth at a job fair.

**Career:** *noun* – a profession that usually requires training.

**Career Pathway:** *noun* – an organized way of career planning for individuals who want to start a career or improve their skills for different or better job opportunities.

**Career inventory:** *noun* – questions that help a person decide on a career and shows a person’s likes, dislikes, and skills. Also called an interest inventory.

**Construction:** *noun* – the building of something or a group of careers that deal with building or maintenance.

**Entry-Level:** *adjective* – the lowest-level position for somebody who is new to a job or career.

**Experience:** *noun* – knowledge or skill about something.

**Hard hat:** *noun* – a protective hat that construction workers wear for safety, usually made of metal or fiberglass.

**Job Fair:** *noun* – also called a career fair or career expo; it is an event where recruiters from both business/industry and schools meet with job seekers.

**License:** *noun* – permission to do a job based on documented proof or skills or passing a test, such as having an electrician’s license.

**On-the-job:** *adjective* – training while at work.

**OJT:** *noun* – abbreviation for on-the-job training. Training at the place of work while a person is doing the actual job.

**Opportunities:** *noun* – chances to do something.

**Non-traditional careers:** *noun* – careers that are non-traditional for women or men are where at least 75 percent of the workers are of the other gender. Example: nontraditional occupations for women are at least 75 percent men.

**Trade:** *noun* – those occupations, such as carpentry, masonry, and plastering that are primarily concerned with the construction and finishing of buildings.