

# THE REALITY STORE® LAYOUT

TRANSPORTATION

INSURANCE

LIFE'S UNEXPECTED

MEDICAL

CHILD CARE

LEGAL

GROCERIES

CLOTHING

FURNITURE

FINANCIAL COUNSELOR

PETS

UTILITIES

CHARITIES

HOUSING

ENTERTAINMENT  
AND TRAVEL

BANK

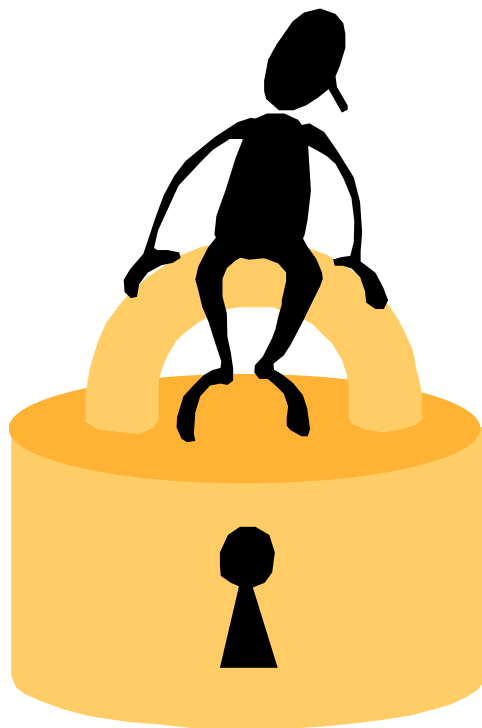
EVALUATIONS

STATISTICS

**REMEMBER:** As you set up for The Reality Store® that each table/booth must have;

- 1) The Reality Store® Layout (Page 69)
- 2) A copy of the Volunteer Instructions for their specific booth (Volunteer Section)
- 3) The forms for their specific booth (Booth Information Section)

# CLASSROOM PREPARATION INFORMATION



**CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES  
AS APPLIED TO  
INDIANA STATE STUDENT STANDARDS**

The Indiana Department of Education has adopted State Standards for Guidance Counselors. Several of these standards can be applied to the activities in this Classroom Preparation section. Unfortunately, we did not find any of the Standards for English or Math that applied. Perhaps the appropriate teachers in the school could better see how these standards may apply or how to adapt the activities to meet some of the standards. The chart below shows the standards that we found that applied.

ACTIVITY	STATE STANDARD FOR GUIDANCE
ACTIVITY # 1 – “ENVISION YOUR LIFE”	
OPTION # 3	# 26 – All students will demonstrate the ability to conduct an information interview to gather information.
ACTIVITY # 2 – “EXPLORE CAREER CHOICES”	
CAREER INVENTORIES	#16 – All students will demonstrate a process for identifying their career interests.  #18 – All students will demonstrate a process for identifying their career aptitudes.
RESEARCHING CAREERS	#17 – All students will demonstrate a process for identifying their career preferences.  #22 – All students will use a variety of information resources, including the Internet, work-site field trips, job shadowing, internships, to research and occupation.  #31 – All students will identify several sources for job openings.
ACTIVITY # 3 – “SELECT AN OCCUPATION/CAREER”	#11 – All students will describe the relationship between classroom performance, school success and postsecondary/career options.
ACTIVITY # 6 – “REALITY STORE <sup>SM</sup> FOLLOW-UP”	#40 – All students will demonstrate an understanding of the consequences of their decisions and choices.

## **CLASSROOM PREPARATION AND FOLLOW-UP**

To help students gain as much as possible from their journey through The Reality Store®, we suggest that teachers devote a minimum of one class period to help students prepare for the experience. If possible, additional class sessions may be used to further explore careers and choices.

Suggested preparatory activities are listed below. Those activities preceded by an asterisk (\*) should be included in the classroom session prior to The Reality Store®.

### **\*ACTIVITY 1: ENVISION YOUR LIFE**

Objectives:

1. To stimulate students to begin thinking about their future and practice stretching their imagination.
2. To provide the teacher with some insight as to student perceptions at the start of the program.

In this exercise, students will be asked a series of questions to help them envision the type of lifestyle they would like to have in their late-20s. If time is limited, students can simply fill in the answers to these questions. (The questions, Envision Your Life, are on the following page.)

If additional time is available, one of the following approaches can be used:

1. The teacher relates his/her own thoughts as a teen regarding the type of careers that he/she was interested in, what his/her expectations were for an adult lifestyle, and how expectations differed from real life experiences. Encourage the students to ask their parents about how their lives might have been different than they had expected when they were in high school.
2. Have the students think about another student they know very well. Ask them to imagine they are editors of a yearbook, and their job is to make predictions about people. Most students have little trouble figuring out the direction their friends are heading.

ASK:

- What can you see your friend doing 15 years from now?
  - How would your friend answer these questions?
  - What would you like someone to write about you?
  - How would they see you responding to these questions?
3. Ask the students to interview a familiar adult. Find out how they would have answered the questions as a teen and how their life experiences were different from their original expectations.
  4. Have students complete the answers to their questions and then ask students to share their responses. Have students explain how they determined their career choice, why they selected the type of lifestyle they did, etc. Discuss some of the difficulties and challenges involved in making life choices. This can be accomplished orally or in essay form.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

## ENVISION YOUR LIFE

Pretend you are 28 years of age. How do you see your life? What would your answers be to the questions below? Fill in your answers.

1. Are you married or single? \_\_\_\_\_

2. If you're married, does your husband/wife work? \_\_\_\_\_

3. How many children do you have? \_\_\_\_\_

If you have children, are they in day care? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Do you have a job? \_\_\_\_\_

If so, what is it? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Where do you live? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Describe your home. \_\_\_\_\_

7. What kind of car do you drive? \_\_\_\_\_

8. What kind of clothes would you like to buy this month? \_\_\_\_\_

9. When you buy groceries, would you buy low cost items (spaghetti), moderately cost items (hamburger) or high priced items (steak)? \_\_\_\_\_

10. What would you do for entertainment? (go to movies, go out to eat, go on vacation, have a hobby, go to plays or concerts) \_\_\_\_\_

11. How much money would you save each month? \_\_\_\_\_

## **\*ACTIVITY 2: EXPLORE CAREER CHOICES**

Objectives:

1. To enable students to explore different career choices and requirements
2. To enable students to determine potential incomes for various types of jobs

Ask the students to think about different types of occupations that interest them. There are several computer programs and/or websites that can be used. The COIN and the CHOICES software programs explore many different careers and their requirements as well as offering a career inventory for the student. The Indiana Career and Postsecondary Advancement Center, ICPAC, has an excellent website with information about a variety of careers as well as limited or in depth, Merkle Index, career inventories. Useful as well are the classified section of the newspaper or the Internet for information about preferred careers. Newspapers are not used as a recruiting tool for many jobs. Other ways of learning about employment opportunities should also be discussed. A few others could be: 1) submitting applications and/or resumes, 2) employment agencies, 3) networking, 4) employment ads in trade publications, 5) college placement services and 6) the Internet. If the student already has a career preference, they could write a letter to the company or person in that career for more information. If the student's occupation involves being an entrepreneur, the discussion could include some of the factors to be considered: 1) financing, 2) office facilities, 3) equipment, 4) staffing, 5) hours needed to start a business and many more.

Several things can be learned from this exercise:

- which jobs are in demand and which are not
- salary/hourly pay for different types of jobs
- education/experience requirements for the job

## **\*ACTIVITY 3: SELECT AN OCCUPATION/CAREER**

Objectives:

1. To enable the student to decide on a potential occupation and to find out the typical income provided by that occupation.
2. To learn about the impact of taxes on their income.
3. To gain experience in completing a checkbook register.

If a student does not have any idea what occupation he/she would like to have, the "default" occupation would be one that pays minimum wage, since without adequate planning, preparation and education, higher paying jobs would be difficult to obtain.

This manual includes a chart of average salaries for a variety of different occupations/careers. Each student will be informed of the yearly and monthly salary associated with the chosen career. The monthly salary is then entered in the "check book". They will also be informed of the taxes associated with that salary. Students will record a "check" to the IRS as a withdrawal in their "checkbook". For simplicity, we have not considered the effect of Social Security or dependent exemptions on the tax amounts.

We suggest that teachers show students how a checkbook register should be completed. It is critical that students understand how to record checks and deposits and how to calculate a balance as an integral part of The Reality Store® experience.

**Important: 1)** Provide students with salary information **only** for their **chosen** occupation/career. We do not want the selection to be impacted by a salary amount. Part of the learning experience of the Reality Store™ is finding that a given occupation may not provide sufficient income to support a desired lifestyle.

2) Try to assure the occupation/career selected is reasonable. The student's current class selections, GPA, grades in specific classes and hobbies should be taken into consideration. Some examples are, engineering requires advanced math, medical doctor requires science, and the NBA requires having played the game.

#### **ACTIVITY 4: CREATE A “DREAM BOARD”**

Objective:

To help students gain a clearer understanding of the type of lifestyle they would like to have as an adult.

Using newspapers, magazines, advertising brochures, or the Internet, each student will make a poster illustrating the lifestyle they envision for themselves at age 28. The pictures used should best illustrate:

1. the occupation/career they have
2. the type of house they would have
3. the type of car they would drive
4. the type of clothes worn for work and leisure
5. the kinds of thing they would do for entertainment (movies, restaurants, travel, hobbies, sport events, concerts, etc.)
6. the family they would have
7. the pets, if any
8. any other dreams they might have

The “Dream Boards” could be displayed in the classroom or in The Reality Store®. The students could share the thought process they followed in selecting items for their “Dream Board” either in essay form or orally.

#### **ACTIVITY 5: REAL LIFE EXPENSES**

Objective:

To enable students to gather information and better understand monthly living expenses.

Ask student to interview parents or a young adult for information about their typical monthly living expenses. This information should include:

1. home mortgage
2. telephone (including cellular phones)

3. heating/air conditioning
4. electricity/gas (lights, stove, water heater, washer and dryer)
5. cable or satellite television
6. groceries
7. child care
8. car expenses (payment, gas, insurance, maintenance)
9. health insurance (personal or employer's group plan)

*Have the students compare the costs for personal insurance for self-employed versus employee. Young people very seldom realize how important health care coverage is in an employee compensation package.*

## THE REALITY STORE® EVENT

During the “classroom preparation”, students should have answered the questions on the “Envision Your Life” sheet, entered a deposit on the check register for the monthly income of their occupation, and recorded the tax payment to the IRS. **TEACHER: Please collect these completed items and hold them until the day of The Reality Store® event.**

**Teachers: The day of the Store please give your students the following information:**

- Take a pencil
- Take a calculator, if available
- Take the “check register”
- The following information

During the trip through The Reality Store® the students will do the following:

1. At the first booth, Statistics, the students will be randomly given marital status, number of children, the “gross” monthly salary, if not already completed, and taxes are deducted.
2. At the next booth, Banking, the students will open a savings account and pay a student loan, if applicable.
3. At the rest of the booths the students will be making decisions and purchases that adults have to make, including, housing, transportation, insurance, utilities, medical expenses and luxuries (phone, cable, entertainment, etc.)
4. They should go to the booths, statistics and banking in order. They are then to go to the booths in any order, but they **must** pay for necessities before the luxuries.
5. At each booth, the volunteer or the student will mark the check register and deduct the necessary payment.
6. At the booth, *Life's Unexpected*, the students will randomly get an “unexpected event”. This “event” will be either positive or negative and may send them to a specific booth to take care of business. For example, they may lose their job and have to go back to Statistics for another one, they may be charged with a DUI and have to go to both the Legal and the Insurance Booths, or they may get a raise.
7. The students need to keep a running total in the check register to be sure they are not overspending. If students find that they are low or out of money they may need a part-time job, less expensive items or money from savings.



8. At the last booth, the students will be given an evaluation form to complete. The students are finished with The Reality Store® upon completion of this form.

Teachers you will probably be asked to help with “traffic control” during the *Store*. You can help immensely by staying with your class and directing small groups of students to start through the *Store* at the first booth. As each group moves on to the next booth start the next group. Although extra staff is usually stationed at these first booths, it is impossible to accommodate an entire class at one time. (You may want to take advantage of this “waiting” time to talk to some of the students about their expectations) When all of your class has passed the first booths, please roam throughout the *Store* to monitor student activity, answer questions, offer guidance and suggest that students move to another booth if a line is too long. A site coordinator will be on hand to answer questions and reassign volunteers as necessary to insure continuous movement through the *Store*.

## FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

### \*ACTIVITY 6: THE REALITY STORE® FOLLOW-UP

Objective:

1. To evaluate the impact of the *Store* on students’ attitudes, expectations, and goals.
2. To reinforce the need to make good choices **NOW** in order to preserve the ability to make a variety of choices **LATER** when choosing a lifestyle.

Ask the students to review their original answers on the “Envision Your Life” questionnaire and discuss any changes they would make, if attitudes and expectations have changed. Have the students share the most important lessons they learned from their experience at the *Store*, the biggest surprises, and how this will affect their future choices. The guidance counselor may wish to attend this follow-up session to explain how students can find out more information about the requirements and what needs to be done to meet the requirements of their chosen career.