

Job or Career...?

One recent morning, I overheard a young man tell a friend, “I don’t know why are you going to night school, you still won’t find a job when you graduate.” To which the other young man replied, “You’re right, but I don’t want a job, I want a career.”

We often use these two terms interchangeably and it is very easy to mix the two. For example, your town is sponsoring a Job Fair next week, while the local college is hosting a Career Fair the same day.

Some will argue that there is no difference between the two terms, however; we believe there is a significant difference and it is important to understand that distinction when you seek out new opportunities.

	Job	Career
Definition ¹	“A piece of work; <i>especially</i> : a small miscellaneous piece of work undertaken on order at a stated rate.”	“A field or pursuit of consecutive progressive achievement especially in public, professional, or business life.”
Commitment	Obligation to your employer.	Obligation to yourself.
Training & Development	Certain jobs require special training, however, many do not.	Most careers begin with education followed by continuous learning and development throughout your career.
Time Horizon	Short term.	Long term.

JOB

Simply put, a job is when you are paid for your labor. It doesn’t matter whether you are paid by the hour, by the piece, on commission, or on a fixed salary. A job only puts money in your pocket.

A job is something you do with little or no concern about the long term.

Work activities for a job typically remain the same, all the time.

This said, there is nothing wrong with just taking a job. Many people will be happy to simply have a job, and for those who want more, jobs can help you find your career. Most of us don’t know what we want to be when we grow up, so taking a series of different jobs can help you find what you love to do.

¹ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/>

Can a job turn into a career? Definitely; among other factors, careers are about building on work experience and advancing your job skills and knowledge.

Can someone move from a career into a job? Yes. Consider how many people take a job after retiring from their career just to stay active and social, and to put a few extra dollars in their pocket.

But just remember that if you find yourself saying, "It's only a job," it may be time to move on.

CAREER

A career is when you perform a sequence of jobs within the same field that ideally lead to recognition and successive promotion.

With a career, one continues to learn, grow, and advance.

A career involves goal setting; a job does not.

Aiming for a career, however, doesn't mean that you will not have to persevere through a series of jobs that provide little satisfaction. Quite the opposite - many careers require new entrants to work their way up the ladder by performing many basic and uninteresting tasks. This is often referred to as "paying your dues."

As boring as they may be, each of these menial jobs will teach you different things you need for your career. Of course, they could also change your mind about choosing this particular profession as your career, and while that may sound harsh, it is better to know early into your career that you made the wrong choice.

A job is an obligation to your employer; a career is an obligation to yourself.

A career is a life story....a life journey. Each phase.....each activity, leads to the next. Careers require forward-thinking and planning.

When you aim for a career, you willingly put in extra value. While a job can pay handsomely and make you very wealthy, with a successful career, you have a chance to achieve this, and more. With a career you will also grow your mind, your sense of self esteem, and your outlook on life in general.

You can outgrow a job, but a career will make you keep looking for new challenges.

What matters is not where you start, but where you finish.



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