

NAME: _____

DATE: _____



CASE STUDY

Scenario 1: Animal Careers

Introduction

Some decisions are more difficult than others. We make many small, quick decisions each and every day, often without much thought or planning. For example, how early we need to wake up, or what to take with us when we leave for school or to spend time with friends. Other choices are more complex and require thoughtful consideration.

Figuring out how you want to earn a living, for example, is one of those bigger decisions. Not only will this career be the source of income to pay for the things you want and need; but also it will be how you spend a substantial portion of your day.

Choosing a career path involves asking several, sometimes difficult, questions. What are your interests, and what careers match those interests? What education and training are required, and how will you pay for it? How much income do you need to earn to meet your financial needs and wants?

These and other questions are important and can seem daunting. There are so many uncertainties. How do we even begin to think through these and other kinds of important life decisions?

Your friend Carmen is facing just such a life decision. She is a junior in high school and does not yet know what she wants to do after graduation. Carmen has asked you to help her explore her options. She tells you that she is undecided about what career she'd like to pursue and whether or not she should attend college. Carmen further explains that she doesn't know how to even go about making those decisions. There is one thing that Carmen does know with certainty however: she loves animals.

You've been friends with Carmen since she was 10 years old. You know that she began pet sitting to save money so that she could afford horseback riding lessons. You often helped her walk dogs for neighbors who had to work late. And when neighbors traveled out of town, Carmen cared for a variety of pets, including cats, fish, and even a parakeet. As Carmen gained confidence in working with animals, she began volunteering at the local wildlife rescue center.

Alternative Career Routes

You and Carmen decide to consider three alternative career routes. Each route involves working with animals but requires a different amount of education, training, and cost. Each route also leads to jobs with different work environments, responsibilities, and salaries:

1. Professional Degree Route: Veterinarian

Veterinarians are healthcare professionals focused on animals. They work in varied settings, including private practices, farms, animal hospitals, zoos, aquariums, and labs. They can diagnose and treat diseases, prescribe medication, and perform surgery. Veterinarians often specialize in treating certain species. They must earn a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree. The training period is lengthy and can be expensive.

2. Skilled Trades Route: Veterinary Technician

Veterinary technicians conduct medical tests to diagnose animal injuries and illnesses. They work the animals under the supervision of Veterinarians in private clinics, laboratories, and animal hospitals. Technicians need to earn a 2-year associate degree. They must pass an exam to become registered, licensed, or certified in the state where they work.

3. Military Route: Military Working Dog Handler

Military working dog handlers oversee the care and training of dogs in the United States and abroad. The handlers and their dogs perform special law enforcement duties that include locating lost or wanted persons, detecting substances and weapons, and identifying unauthorized items in packages. Military working dog handlers must attend 10 weeks of Basic Training and 17 weeks of Advanced Individual Training.

Your Task

You agree to help Carmen think through the three alternative career routes by completing the following steps:

Step 1: Define the problem and key factors.

1. What decisions does Carmen need to make?
2. What key factors are important to Carmen in making the decisions?

3. What uncertainties does Carmen face?

Step 2: Collect information.

Collect additional information and data on each of the three alternative career routes. You can use the comparison table below to record what you find. Sources might include:

- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics website: <https://www.bls.gov/>
- U.S. Army website: <https://www.goarmy.com/careers-and-jobs/career-match/support-logistics/safety-order-legal/31k-military-dog-handler.html>

Career Comparison Table

	Veterinarian	Veterinarian Technician	Military Working Dog Handler
Education & Training • Requirements • Months / Years • Costs & Expenses			
Job Responsibilities			
Work Environment			
Salary			
Job Growth Outlook			
Other?			

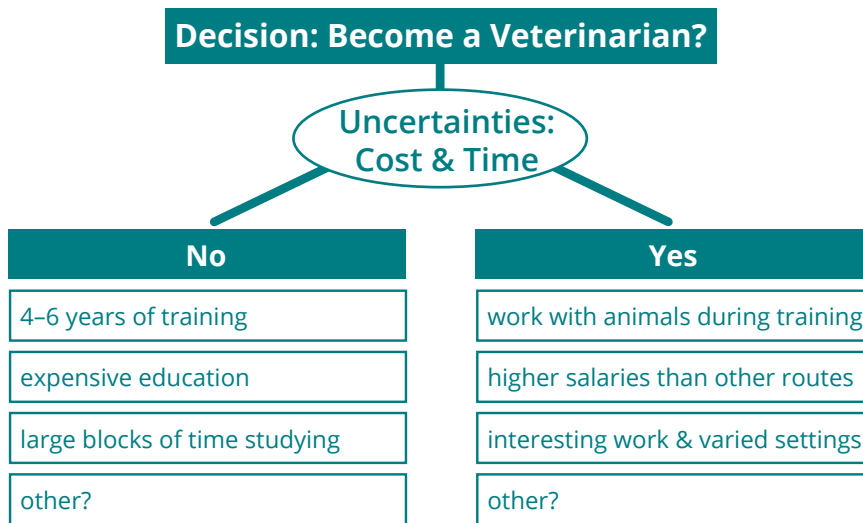
Step 3: Evaluate the alternatives and choose the best option.

Collect additional information and data on each of the three alternative career routes. You can use the comparison table below to record what you find. Sources might include:

Use a **decision tree** to help Carmen decide which career route is best for her. Use the decision tree template provided or create your own to evaluate your options. Be prepared to explain your decision and the process you used to arrive at it.

Here is an example of a completed decision tree for Carmen's first alternative:

Carmen's Decision Tree: Advanced Education Route



How would you complete the decision tree for Carmen’s second and third alternatives?

The Decision Question

Uncertainty

No

Yes

The Decision Question

Uncertainty

No

Yes

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