



GET A LIFE

As you enter your college career, it's never too soon to think about your future goals. For this assignment, I would like you to imagine the life of your dreams. If you could be anything, what would you be? Where would you live? Would you have children? If so, how many? What kind of car would you drive?

DREAM JOB...

The [Occupational Outlook Handbook](#) is a great place to start your career research. This resource gives a great overview of:

- The career of your choice
- The education required for this career
- The pros and cons of this career
- The salary you might expect to earn working in that career.

CRIBS...

Next, pick a place in the United States in which you might like to live. Go to [Zillow.com](#) and explore the cost of a single family home in that area. Would you be able to afford housing in that area based on the salary you might expect to earn? [Rent.com](#) also lets you explore rentals.

AND SPEAKING OF CRIBS...

If you would like to have children, it is important to anticipate the cost to raise a child today. Read [The Cost to Raise a Child Today](#) to get a good overview of this topic. There are also many online calculators available to help you estimate the cost of raising a child. You may want to try the [Cost of Raising a Child](#) which factors in where you live, annual income, etc.

HOT WHEELS...

Don't forget to consider the cost of transportation. If you're living in a city, you might rely on public transportation. Most people today will have to buy a car. [Edmunds.com](#) offers a calculator to help you determine monthly payments on your dream car.

CASH FLOW...

Once you've explored all these options, you may want to put together a sample monthly budget based on your best estimate from the research you've done. Again, there are many sample budgets available online.

A simple budget can be found at <http://www.personalbudgeting.com/sample/sample.html>.

A more detailed outline can be found at http://financialplan.about.com/library/n_budget.htm

WELCOME TO THE REAL WORLD...

Now that you're done exploring, here's hoping you can make your dreams become a reality!

Want a little music while you're researching? Why not try some John Mayer REAL WORLD sounds on [YouTube](#).